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ABSTRACT

The three issues of the journal on second language teacher education include these articles: "We Need More and Different Flags" (Agnes Martin); "Dealing with Timetabling on Second Language Teacher Training Courses" (Craig Thaine); "Interview with Jill Florent"; "Haiku Idea" (Tim Hahn); "The Hidden History of a Lesson or Who Trained Me?" (Mario Rinvolucri); "Language Matters" (David Crystal); "Micro-Planning: A New Technique in In-Service Training" (Mihaela Tilinca); "Using Unseen Observations for and IST Development Programme" (Phil Quirke); "Breaking Down Barriers: The Adjustment of Immigrant Teachers to New Educational Frameworks" (Ephraim Weintroub); "The Post-PPP Debate: An Alternative Model?" (Clive Lovelock); "Suitcases, a Training Idea" (Rod Bolitho); "On 'Control' in Second Language Teaching Classrooms" (Zuo Biao); "Who Trains the Trainers? School-Based Mentorship and the Future of Teacher Training" (J. R. A. Williams); "Indian Problems and Indian Solutions" (M. N. K. Bose); "Meet a Colleague" (Margaret Szesztay); "Language Matters 'Sleaze'" (John Ayto); "The Use of Metaphor in Post Lesson Feedback" (Simon Marshall); "Trainee Voices...One Way of Hearing Them" (Tessa Woodward); "'Were You Wanting To Play?' A Reply to Peter Grundy" (Tony Penston); "A Human Rights Approach to Teacher Training" (F. Gomes de Matos); "'The Look': Observations on Observation" (Tom Farrel); "'Double TP' The Value of Teacher Trainees Repeating Their Practice Lessons" (David Bell); "Micro-Teaching Feedback Styles--An Investigation of Trainee Preference" (Jill Cadorath); "'ARC': Does It Have Restricted Use?" (Scott Thornbury); "Professional Language-Is It Useful or Is It a Restriction Close to Censorship?" (Tessa Woodward); "Career Pathways" (Rod Bolitho); "The Attitudes of French National son a UK PGCE Course" (Beatrice Davies); and "Train Ourselves First?" (Wu Xin). Notes on publications and professional activities are also included in each issue. (MSE)

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The Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL MAINLY FOR
MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINERS

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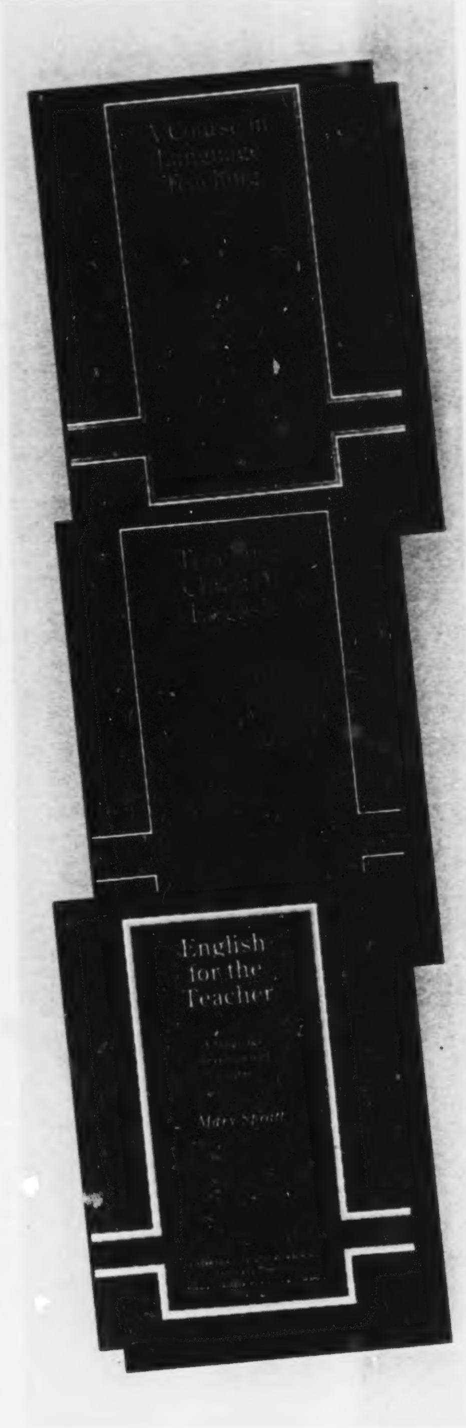

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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

Editorial

I can hardly believe that we are now in our tenth year! Even more amazing is that we still have with us some of the same advertisers, contributors and subscribers who supported the journal when it started as a rather scrappy newsletter in 1986. Thanks to all of you for your stamina and support!

Famous names? Yes, we have two this issue. David Crystal has kindly agreed to contribute to our new column Language Matters in each volume. His piece this time is about helping language teachers to help language students with the increasing variation and change in English.

Mario Rinvolucri goes digging, in an archaeological fashion, into one of his own lessons to find out where the elements of his lesson come from. He mentions students, colleagues, books and writing as past influences and mentors.

Absolute newcomers? But of course, they are here too! Jean Rudiger writes for us for the first time about the problems that women teachers can have in classes of young men, especially in rather patriarchal societies. She has real, practical ideas for those training teachers to go into this uncomfortable setting.

Craig Thaine is also joining us as a first time contributor. He is concerned to help pre-service trainees get some practice in time-tabling series of lessons as well as just planning individual ones.

Some of our "old favourite" series are back in this issue:

– Interview. We continue to round out the journal with different TESOL viewpoints and voices by encouraging Jill Florent, Heinemann's methodology publisher, to talk about her job and her work on Heinemann's new book series for teachers.

– Process options. Mihaela Tilinca, one of our able book reviewers, this time shares a practical idea for in-service training. It is not micro-teaching but micro-planning an unthreatening way of ensuring the transfer of ideas from the training room to the classroom.

– Conference report. I was lucky enough to be able to attend the Edinburgh Symposium on trainer training in November of last year. I've written a brief report and hope to have some contributions from fellow participants in the next issue.

– Observation and feedback. Since going into teachers' classes often causes disruption, fear and unnaturalness, why not try talking to teachers about what they've done rather than insisting on watching them do it? Phil Quirke develops this idea of "unseen observation" in this issue.

– Apart from squeezing in a quick "Haiku-idea" from Tim Hahn, I've also included a piece by Ephraim Weintroub on re-training Soviet teachers in Israel. Every time I bump into Ephraim at conferences and ask him what he's up to, he talks with eloquent passion about his "Russian teachers". So I asked him to explain why he is so entranced and involved with them. He does so in this issue.

Other news is that we have our first job advert in this issue. Please use our pages to advertise anything trainer-related. We can always send you price and design information on request.

I really hope you enjoy this issue and will continue to support this unique journal with comments, contributions and subscriptions and by telling your professional contacts that it exists.

Have a very good 1996!

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward, Editor.

"We Need More and Different Flags" (Agnes Martin)

or Women teachers and male adolescents.

Introduction

This article has been stimulated partially by my own experiences and partially by my growing concern for young women teachers I have observed, who, in spite of a solid academic and didactic background, are experiencing enormous difficulties with the realities of classroom life, when having to deal with male adolescents and all male classes. The distress caused by these situations has raised many questions in my mind. Why are these people failing, which aspects of their teaching are causing dissension, which student expectations were not being met, but most of all where has these teachers' training let them down? In an article of this length it is obviously impossible to discuss any of these issues in real depth, much less provide solutions, yet I hope it will act as a sensitiser to aspects of teacher training which I believe are worthy of more consideration, for women and men.

An illustrative case study

First, let me illustrate more carefully the points I have in mind. Let us imagine a woman honours graduate teaching any subject. She comes from any university, and is well versed in all modern learning theories, au fait with techniques similar to or analogous with those in EFL such as group work, role play, problem solving activities, raising student awareness to the part her subject plays in the students' daily life etc. She has used all these techniques in teaching practice and is now keen to put them into effect in the new job. Well-educated, well-trained, perhaps even multi-lingual with a pleasant personality, she is buoyantly looking forward, not without reason to the first school year.

A year later she is no longer buoyant, there is no spring to her step, school has become an onerous burden. Techniques that seemed to work for her trainers, (in German speaking countries usually men), and for her colleagues, (also usually men), do not work for her. She feels the students are beyond her control, perhaps they openly show their disrespect, for adolescents are not famed for their diplomacy. Grasping at straws she has taken to wearing horn-rimmed glasses instead of her usual contact lenses, dresses in dark colours, has developed a draconian testing system, begun to throw pupils out of the classroom, adopted a carping, or parade ground voice, in short totally denied her true personality and all to no avail as, with their usual dagger-like percipience, the adolescents recognise all or any of the above as an attempt to appear more authoritative, and thus as confirmation that they have the upper hand. A fictional case based on all too uncomfortable fact.

What the pupils say

In an effort to gain insight and perhaps the beginnings of a solution to the problem I have, over the past year, interviewed both forms and individual teenagers who have been causing discipline problems for woman teachers. Amongst these students are some of my own pupils, admittedly difficult sixteen year olds, quick to use verbal and sometimes physical violence in their dealings with peers. Their conflict solving options are limited, something we work on in weekly group dynamic sessions. When asked to formulate the problem as they experience it, they have provided some enlightening and disturbing comments. Here is a cross-section of the answers I have received over the years: "I can't respect her because she's not much older than I am." "I'm bigger than she is." "She sounds as if she's about to cry." "We know she's frightened, we're like dogs, we go for her."(sic) "She's always saying I think – I believe – perhaps, so I don't think she knows her subject." In economics, biology, geography or language teaching, no matter what the subject, pupils say categorically:" Things are or they aren't. It's not a subject to have opinions about. "She says she doesn't agree with the things in the book." "She's got a thing about me, I get the blame for everything now" (this from the ringleader). "I just don't believe anything she tells us." I think she's incompetent she keeps looking at her notes before she goes on to the next sentence." And finally as if this said it all: "She's a feminist." General laughter.

The issues involved

In analysis these answers relate to the following issues. The first one is the truth universally unacknowledged, that in many countries of the world women are still not regarded as being intrinsically worthy of respect, as persons fitted for authority, or as possessors of worthwhile specialised knowledge. This is particularly true in societies such as German speaking Switzerland, where women are seen in mainly domestic roles, where sexism is not yet viewed as politically incorrect and where sexist jokes are still considered witty. The second issue, closely related to the first is the male/female communication barrier, and the misconstruing of signals on both sides. While the final issue is the psychology and culture of the adolescent.

Personal experience

I myself had to come to terms with these issues seven years ago, when I changed from teaching EFL to mixed adult classes at a further education college, to teaching secondary and tertiary levels at a grammar school in the German speaking part of Switzerland, where the vast majority of the staff are men. As in the illustration provided above I had an enormous backpack of theory, innumerable techniques, and an unshakeable believe in the rightness of facilitating and a highly developed conscience on the matter of teacher talking time. It took me a semester to come to terms with the fact that in spite of this, I was not being heard by my colleagues, and my students did not accord the

continued →

same significance to my lessons as they did to those lessons of traditionally minded colleagues. I never lost the students' respect, but I know if I had not at that point admitted to myself that for this situation re- and additional training was necessary , (for instance learning how to function effectively at a professional level within a male dominated culture), I would have all too soon been in the hopeless position of our fictitious teacher. Most of this training I could only get through wide reading and a trial and error approach. Nothing in my initial training had prepared me for being rejected on the grounds of my gender and my methodology, and further training courses only offered more theories and techniques for that same methodology. Neither could I get help at work. Few German Swiss grammar schools provide support systems for new teachers and questions and discussions on specific pedagogical problems are often interpreted by colleagues as signs of incompetence. Opinions of incompetence then seem to trickle down to the students by, one assumes, a process of osmosis. A real Catch 22 situation, though not one that is confined to Switzerland. I was most interested to read of similar attitudes at American Universities in Deborah Tannen's new book Talking from 9-5 (1995. pp.27).

Suggestions for teacher training

With hindsight , I am now of the opinion that training courses should provide a component which deals with the darker sides of teaching. A component which allows trainee teachers, to discuss items such as discipline problems, conflict, gender discrimination, methodology discrimination, methodology appropriateness, unsupportive colleagues etc., as well as considering strategies for overcoming such problems. Often training takes place in a rarefied, decontextualised, connective atmosphere of perfect methods for perfect students, which methods are often invested with the sanctity of the ten commandments. Teaching principles imbued in this way are doubly difficult to adapt because of the feelings of guilt that often accompany the process, and I would argue women find it even more difficult to adapt / discard, what they have been taught because they are more conditioned to mistrust their own judgements than men. (Brown/Gilligan. 1992.pp.13)

For example: Once I had discovered adolescents react much more favourably to a firm directive line which allows them practice in conflict skills and room for confrontation.(Baacke 1993. pp.317) and actually prefer authoritarian resolutions to school conflict. (see Coleman and Hendry.1980 pp. 8) and that male adolescents are not particularly motivated by an empathetic, connective classroom manner, finding it intrusive, and prefer a more reserved factual style at least at the beginning of a course, until the pecking order has been established (Guggenbuhl, Neue Zurcher Zeitung). I adjusted my teaching style accordingly to accommodate their expectations of what the teachers says goes, whereupon classroom management and my subject's status changed enormously and for the better. However it cost me a great deal of heart searching to abandon the facilitator connective approach, i.e. emphasising bonds rather than separateness, which, on the grounds of nature and nurture, I had so long believed was the optimal way to get results.

If you are working or planning to work in a society which does not naturally accept women in an authoritative role, it becomes vital to work on your presence and manner in the classroom, so that you become not only visible and audible but empoweringly so and it is imperative that this is achieved in the first few lessons. Let me make it clear that I am not advocating women teachers should try to copy the way men talk, or as Professor Cameron puts it in her article in a previous edition of this journal that they should think: "It's about time I learned to interrupt people!" But I am advocating a careful review of modes of behaviour, verbal and otherwise, learned from adolescence onwards, (again see Brown/Gilligan 1992 pp 48.) which viewed from a power oriented perspective, may carry latent messages of self-apology and doubt. In many ways communicative language teaching resembles women's communication, or rather society's expectations of the way women should communicate, with many of its tenets based on personalisation, connection, and mutual support, accompanied by a careful avoidance of any sort of power display by the teacher. This in itself leads to misunderstandings, thus speech patterns designed to emphasise mutual co-operation in the classroom such as *let's* and *shall we, how about* can, at first, certainly by Swiss men, be interpreted as showing lack of direction and / or as being signs of insecurity, i.e. *she doesn't really know what she's doing*, or *she's unwilling to take responsibility for the dynamics of the lesson*. Expressions such as *I believe, I think* when imparting information are better left aside and the information allowed to speak for itself. Discussions about grey areas of any subject can also only be engaged upon when you have imparted sufficient facts and answered sufficient questions confidently avoiding provisos, for the grey areas to be accepted as such and not as excuses for gaps in your personal knowledge. Remember the comments: *She doesn't agree with the book. – I don't believe a word she tells us.* Here adolescents are especially vulnerable as their life experience has not yet made them capable of coping with uncertainties, and their need to see the world in black and white, good or bad, often makes them intolerant of any world view which threatens this perspective.

Voice quality and posture are an integral part of being seen and heard, and many women teachers have to learn not to be frightened to take up space in a classroom, are worried about appearing too assertive, yet it is exactly the ability to claim one's right to position that men both expect and respect. Therefore things to be avoided are hunched shoulders, stooping, crossing your arms in front of you, reluctance to stand in more than one or two places in the room, using fluttery hand gestures, for they are all signals capable of being misconstrued as discomfort and uncertainty. Students need to see you are not intimidated by them so they don't get the feeling that *they are bigger than you* even if you are only five foot six and they are all over six foot and weight lift before breakfast. For myself one of the most informative books I read on this subject was *The Right to Speak* by Patsy Rodenburg, a book which explains how to achieve confident, powerful balance of voice and posture without bluffing or domineering. It is a book that could usefully be employed on any teacher training course.

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Measures to improve self-reliance

Finally I should like to see a psychology component in every teacher training course which would help teachers to understand their reactions when under stress and criticism. Many state schools in Britain employ counselling staff as back up support for teachers in such situations realising that negative beliefs can emerge when teachers feel most under threat and least able to achieve a professional resolution to the problem (Grey et al.pp.2) As the student rightly diagnosed: *She's got a thing about me.* Unfortunately very few teachers and certainly very few EFL teachers are in the enviable situation of receiving such support, so it appears that trainees could fruitfully work with trained psychologists on their initial training courses to learn self-support and conflict- solving skills so they can cope with sufficient professionalism and emotional distance in potentially esteem -lowering situations. Situations with which it will always be a teacher's lot to cope, so that just as surely the aim of every training course must try to ensure that the vulnerable and inexperienced learn to do so as well and as painlessly as possible. One initial idea that suggests itself is the possibility for trainees to tape a selection of feedback sessions with their teacher trainers and then afterwards together with a trained counsellor on a one to one basis, listen to and discuss in depth their reactions to that feedback. With supportive psychological counselling each trainee would then have the opportunity to understand their personal responses to criticism and find out why and where they are most vulnerable, without losing a sense of their own worth. Following this appropriate strategies can be developed for coping with potential areas of insecurity and aggression, before the props of trainer, course, fellow trainees and mother culture are removed. Prevention rather than cure.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

Trainer training symposium in Edinburgh, Scotland

About 50 trainers from Romania, India, Portugal, The Philippines, Cyprus, Britain, Slovakia, Germany, The Czech Republic, Israel, Italy, Hungary and Saudi Arabia met in the University staff club in Edinburgh from November 15-17, at the invitation of the Institute for Applied Linguistics, University of Edinburgh.The symposium, the third of its kind, was entitled,"Learning to train". Over the three days there were 28 presentations. One set of 3 related papers on mentoring formed a linked colloquium with questions at the end on all three papers. There was a panel discussion at the very end entitled, "Awareness training: does it work?", and dinner and Scottish dancing on the middle evening.

I was lucky enough to get my main presentation over in the first hour and so felt free to enjoy the experience of being in a friendly group of peers all reporting on very interesting work in progress. I was struck by how many different types of relationship the 50 participants had with each other! Tutors were there with their Phd students, publishers with their authors, and mentors presented with their mentees. I personally counted people who I had published and who had published me, people I had studied next to and people I had team-taught with. I met people I had last seen at job interviews or presenting at conferences and others whose writing I had admired but who I had never met in person before. It was like one huge, family wedding where you meet distant cousins you haven't seen since you were kids together! 50 was the perfect number enabling old contacts time to catch up on gossip and new friends to be made.

The tight discipline of 45 minute talks meant talks were targeted and there was no temptation to drift off mentally. The organisation was superb with tea and coffee on time, all talks taped and, if you missed the whole thing, look out for the published version of the papers in due course!

Presenters came from radically different backgrounds and starting points. There were people involved in a cascade training programme in Maharashtra, India where the numbers of teachers involved will be 50,000 and the pupils 1.3 million by the time the scheme finishes! The teachers get 3 days training themselves before going on to train others. From 3 days to 3 months for pre-service schemes in Britain, and 3 years in one pre- service institute in Budapest. There were freelance trainers working primarily within an action research setting and university lecturers within mainstream masters courses. There were presenters discussing how to improve lesson observation and feedback and another who spent 50 minutes denouncing both as totally fraudulent activities!

My main impression at first then was of diversity of background, practice and training model. Despite this, some words came up again and again. We heard the words, "reflection", and "appropriate methodology" a lot. And just about everyone talked about "change"! This word echoed from session to session. Donard Britten, British Council, Romania, felt that the only chance for transfer of learning and change to take place in a country where recent national experience has given reason for and practice in dissembling, was for a trainer to be "clear and passionate". Chris Kennedy, University of Birmingham, suggested that any institution that wanted to survive has to be a learning institution. He described the cycles, skills and sub-skills necessary for organisations and people to evolve and change. Graziella Pozzo from Italy prefers to use negotiation, rating scales and dilemma analysis to help teachers to dig out their assumptions and in this way clear the ground for change. There was talk of trainers changing themselves and others, and of resistance to change.

The colloquium on mentoring was of particular interest to me. One mentor and one mentee from 3 different settings.. in-service , pre- service and research ... spoke in turn, after which the six women involved (Lin Dawson and Bohdana Navratilova, Lily Orland -Belleli and Deborah Wolkinson, Corony Edwards and Nicki Marshall) sat at the front of the room to take questions. The depth of the mentoring relationship formed in each case was clear in the evident respect the pairs had for each other and in the use of words such as "reciprocity" and "mutuality". The very fact that it was only in the mentoring colloquium that "trainers" co-presented with their "trainees" showed the potential for balance and equality in this model.

It is really hard to pick out my personal favourites from all the excellent talks I attended.(There were many parallel workshops too so it was impossible to attend everything.) For new and democratic insights ,I have to mention Margit Szesztay's work on "training from the inside" by using the experience of being a group member in order to improve skills as a group leader. And for sheer fun and iconoclasm I have to mention Alun Rees's session, for in it he demolished every grounds for observing teachers and giving them feedback on their work! Will I ever do it again? Probably not.

So, although it was a long way to go, this symposium gave a wonderful chance to meet people who share some of the same job characteristics but who have very different ways of perceiving and tackling it.

The next symposium, on the theme of "Theory in Language Teacher Education", will take place in Edinburgh, November 23-25,1996. For further details write to Ian McGrath, IALS, University of Edinburgh, 21 Hill Place, Edinburgh EH8 9FP.

Dealing with Timetabling on Second Language Teacher Training Courses

by Craig Thaine

1. Introduction

A common staffroom sight is the native speaker novice teacher grappling with a course book. Having just graduated from some kind of short, intensive teacher training course they have probably just about learnt how to extract a one-hour lesson from a confusing mass of material. Newly trained non-native speaker teachers too may find trying to prepare longer sequences rather overwhelming. I graduated from a four-week intensive course and did sit through a seminar on timetabling, but it faded quickly from memory. When I eventually learnt to timetable, my day-to-day lesson planning became so much easier.

Based then on my own experience, and from questioning both native and non-native speaker teachers who had recently trained in England, Australia and New Zealand, I was concerned, as an ELT teacher trainer, that teacher training courses were often not adequately preparing candidates in the very useful skill of timetabling in daily, weekly or monthly blocks. Although courses are invariably jam-packed with content, I felt there must be a way to give timetabling a higher profile. I was also interested to note recently in Marie Morgan's paper (Morgan 1993) that this was an area in which surveyed trainees felt they had little preparation. Further, like teaching itself, timetabling is a skill that is probably best learnt experientially.

2. Approaches

A lot of my work as a teacher trainer has been in the context of the RSA/Cambridge CTEFLA and the model I describe below evolved in that context. However, having taught on a postgraduate diploma course on second language teaching methodology, I can see how the approach could be adjusted and spread across a longer period of time (assuming there is a practicum component to the course), or could be coupled with a school placement practicum.

In trying to give timetabling a higher profile on the course I was involved in, I borrowed and adapted ideas from colleagues. It took three attempts to find a model that was satisfactory for both trainees and trainers. While the model I describe below is not in any way set or perfect, I feel it does better prepare trainees for one aspect of second language teaching that they will have to grapple with in the real world.

I have adopted a three-pronged approach. The first involves a written assignment, the second means placing a seminar on timetabling early in a course, and the third requires trainees to begin timetabling their own practicum lessons by the middle of the second week of the course.

3. Written assignment

For the past two years, we have used portfolio assessment of written work in the second language methods course of the University of Waikato Diploma in Second Language Teaching (see Paltridge 1994). I was attracted by the inherent fairness of this approach. Using portfolio assessment for a written assignment on the topic of timetabling, offers teacher trainees experiential learning in this skill.

The written work includes a three-day timetable sequence of five hours per day, based around a unit of a course book, together with a connected lesson plan based on a piece of authentic material that is part of the timetable. The inclusion of the lesson plan aims to highlight the relationship between lesson and timetable, and the amount of detail required for each.

Early in the course, trainees write a draft of the timetable, together with an introduction that states the level and place of instruction, while briefly describing the target group of students and general organising principle. This is handed in, corrected and returned within two days. Trainees then write the first draft of the lesson plan which, like the timetable, is marked and returned quickly. Trainees rework the above material on the basis of tutors' feedback for handing in at the beginning of the final week of the course. Tutors mark and return this material to trainees before the end of the course. At all stages, this work is graded.

4. The Timetabling Seminar

In order to give trainees some guidance for the first draft of their timetable, it is necessary to include a seminar on timetabling early in the course. This early placing may seem at odds with what is considered necessary for trainees to focus on at this stage. In a teacher training course linking this approach to a school placement practicum, it would be necessary to conduct the seminar before trainees go to take up their placement.

In the session, we look briefly at the relationship between curriculum, syllabus and timetable in order to establish at which level we expect the assignment to be. While covering the reasons for timetabling and different organising principles, trainees also

Timetabling?
over there.
PB

continued →

receive a very clear model of what they are expected to achieve. It also helps to use the last fifteen to twenty minutes of the seminar getting trainees to brainstorm ideas for their timetables.

I find it is usually effective for trainees to prepare a timetable for the same level of students they are dealing with in their practicum at that time. Trainees are provided with a course book to timetable from, and are directed to a unit to tackle. This course book is an alternative to the one they use for the practicum, which means they can use the latter as supplementary material for their timetable. I encourage trainees to support each other by working work on their timetables together, beyond the seminar's allotted time.

5. Timetabling Their Own Practicum

The arrival of a new teacher trainer on staff provided the third component of our approach to timetabling. This tutor had experience of trainees timetabling their own lessons for the practicum at a very early stage in teacher training courses.

We have adapted this model so that trainees receive tutor-written guidelines for the practicum for the first six teaching days of the practicum, after which they are required to timetable from the course book themselves. Initially, there is a lot of guidance and supervision from the tutors in this process. We start by getting trainees to analyse the structure of the timetable that they have been given in the guidelines. It is important to focus their attention on macro shapes and overall aims, while highlighting linguistic and thematic links across two or more days of teaching. This process is begun after trainees have taught their second lesson, and links in with trainees' attempt at a first draft of a timetable. Their first efforts need to be very directed by the tutor and, initially, they are usually only capable of timetabling on a day-by-day basis. However, beyond the midway point in the course, they are beginning to look at material in two or three day blocks with some degree of independence.

6. Reactions -Trainees

Trainee reactions have been monitored in feedback on written work. The following quote is representative of most trainees on courses where we have used this approach to timetabling:

> "Attempting the timetable and lesson plan was difficult the first time, but having the opportunity to rework these made the feedback very valuable and useful. We learned a lot and will be able to put this into practice in the future."

It is also interesting to note trainees' spontaneous reactions at each step of the process. The seminar seems comprehensible to them until they attempt the first draft of the timetable. While working on it, they re-read their seminar notes and experience a degree of confusion, but battle on anyway. When I hand back their first draft I invariably revise and clarify key points from the seminar. Trainees admit that a lot of the information makes more sense to them second time round as a result of attempting their first draft.

Trainees often greet the news that they are to timetable their own practicum lessons early on with a certain amount of scepticism. However, when they realise the degree of guidance they will receive initially, they generally feel more relaxed and confident about it. Further, this work is always done as a group, so there is always the security of there being more than one head involved in the process. Trainees are often surprised at how quickly they learn to organise their practicum.

All three components of the approach complement and inform each other. It is useful for trainees if this is made explicit by means of reference to their timetabling of the practicum when feeding back on the first draft of the written assignment and vice versa. Interestingly, trainees will often have break-throughs in understanding the skill at different points in the course. For example, while timetabling the practicum something will clarify for a trainee about the first draft of the written assignment. This highlights the advantage of a three-pronged approach. What is most pleasing is that without exception, on courses where we have given timetabling a higher focus, trainees are able to see the practical value of it.

7. Reactions – Tutors

Tutors feel they have prepared trainees a little more fully for the real world of language teaching, a full-time teaching timetable and a variety of course books. We do not feel that this approach significantly increases the workload on trainees. Further, the portfolio mode of assessment ensures that trainees spread the energy they devote to the written assignment more evenly over the duration of the course. The marking load for tutors is slightly increased, but when the final portfolio presentation arrives towards the end of the course it is relatively easy and quick to mark.

Conducting a seminar on timetabling so early in a course may mean another seminar topic seen as vital has to wait, but, in essence, this has not proved to be problematic for us in terms of the overall structure and sequencing of seminar topics.

Asking trainees to plan their own lessons for the practicum has meant there are fewer guidelines for tutors to prepare. However, tutors do find it necessary to have a clear idea of a possible direction of the first two or three sessions that trainees organise for themselves, in the event they are bereft of ideas.

There is no guarantee that trainees will timetable in weekly or monthly blocks as a result of having followed this approach on a teacher training course. Nor is there any guarantee that those who decide to timetable when they begin work will do so brilliantly. However, if trainees have dealt with timetabling in this degree of detail, they are more likely to be aware of its importance in language teaching. Finally, from the work we receive when trainees hand in their final portfolio presentation, there is a very clear indication that they have learnt and made progress in this area.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Matthew Dallaway and Brian Paltridge at the University of Waikato Language Institute, as well as Susan Fullagar who initially prompted the idea of giving timetabling stronger emphasis in supervised lesson preparation. Thanks to trainees too.

Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, teachers and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 31/2" or 9cm). Your article needs to be saved on the disk as an ASCII file. Keep your headings and sub-headings in upper and lower case throughout. Provide an accurate word count at the end.
We try to publish your article within about three issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer.
It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication.

We look forward to reading your article!

INTERVIEW

I met up with Jill Florent at the Edinburgh symposium on trainer training. (see) As we were both busy the few days we had there, we conducted an interview through the post on our return south! Here is our current draft!

TW. What's your job, Jill?

JF. My job, as Heinemann's methodology publisher, is to plan the development and direction of book lists ,to find authors and to initiate projects. I'm assisted in this by the series editors. Adrian Underhill (editor of the Teacher Development Series) and Arthur van Essen (editor of the European Language Classroom Series) are both well-known and respected, which gives authors a great sense of confidence. In addition I see books through the writing and production process. However, the author has the hardest job- getting the book written. I try to provide support, and remind writers of the deadlines because timing the publication can be very important.

TW. How long does it take from first proposal to final holding of the book in the hand?

JF. It varies, of course, but two to three years. The writing stage is the longest. Once we have a final manuscript we need about nine months to get bound copies.

TW. What do you feel is special about the new teachers' resource list from HELT?

JF. Each book in the list is individual, telling its own story in its own style. Reading "Learning Teaching", for example, feels almost like being a participant on author Jim Scrivener's initial teacher training course. In "Inside Teaching" Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks invite more experienced teachers to explore their assumptions and beliefs. The Diary of a Language Teacher recounts Joachim Appel's first six years teaching English in a German state school. Many teachers will identify with his vivid description of the gulf between the academic theory of training courses and the reality of life in the classroom.

TW. Is there a vision statement for the series?

JF. Yes, it's stated on the back of each book. The Teacher Development Series will promote development by dealing with professional topics in a personal way. The aim is to deepen understanding , raise self-awareness and encourage self-direction and choice. The European Language Classroom Series addresses issues that concern teachers in both state schools and private education. The aims are to bridge the gap between current language teaching theories and classroom practice, and to benefit from sharing the expertise of foreign language teachers who speak their pupils' mother tongue.

TW. What is the series editor's job?

JF. Adrian Underhill has ensured that the books in his series facilitate development rather than lecture at the

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readers. This is done by making sure the books include tasks and commentary to help readers develop their own thinking, avoid jargon, and have a practical bias and a friendly tone.

For the European Language Classroom series, Arthur van Essen has encouraged authors to make their books practical and to speak directly to the classroom teacher, whether in the private or state sector. The European tradition includes contrastive analysis and cultural studies.

TW. Does Heinemann have other books for language teachers?

JF. There are new editions of classic texts and also a library of collected papers. Teachers Develop Teachers Research edited by Julian Edge and Keith Richards came from the very successful Aston/IATEFL conference on development and research. Challenge and Change in Language Teaching edited by Jane Willis and Dave Willis includes papers describing new ideas, new methods, trials and experiments. Another collection on change and innovation is under consideration. The Handbooks for the English Classroom are short, practical books to help primary and secondary school teachers to develop their own material and tailor it to their individual needs.

TW. How long has Heinemann had a teachers' resource list?

JF. Heinemann's first books for teachers were published in the early 1980s. Many of these appear in new editions for the 1990's. Discover English, Source Book for Teaching English, Teaching Practice Handbook, Choosing Your Coursebook* and TEaching Reading Skills all benefit from a bigger format, clearer layout, and striking covers as well as updated material. The first four titles in the Teacher Development Series were published in 1994. We also made a special version of the Sound Foundations phonemic chart together with a user's guide. The European Language Classroom Series was introduced in 1995. The new series are "live" and new books will appear in each this year.

TW. Is all the writing and editing UK based?

JF. No, Arthur van Essen is head of the Department of Language and Linguistics at Groningen University in the Netherlands. Authors come from: Spain, Poland, Germany, Hungary and the Netherlands.We are also talking to potential authors in Croatia, Denmark, Austria and other countries. Contributers to the collected papers come from Turkey, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Chile. The network gets wider all the time.

TW. What use do you make of readers?

JF. I need to make sure that the costs/sales/quality/triangle works in order to get approval before I can issue a contract. To ensure quality, we always get reports from at least two readers, at three stages.

TW. How does someone become a reader?

JF. I ask people I know, who have knowledge,expertise and interest in a topic. When I meet teachers in different countries, at conferences for example, I ask if they would be interested in reading for me. The fees are not high, but people are usually ready to help. Reports are usually anonymous, and readers don't know whose work they are assessing. Sometimes, though, writers ask me to approach readers whose opinions they respect. Christine Nuttall, for instance, was grateful for Norman Whitney's advice on the new edition of Teaching Reading Skills.

TW. What is the part of your job that you like best? Is it encouraging people who have never written before? Or smelling the new pages of a book you first thought might exist when you had a coffee with someone in Italy? Or something quite different?

JF.Yes, all of those things. I wanted to do the new editions to give a new lease of life to excellent material. But I also wanted new directions, and Adrian Underhill and Arthur van Essen both have their own vision of teacher education and development, which come across in their series.

It's always exciting to get a new book "hot off the press"and to see new authors developing. I'm very proud that Jim Scrivener won the Frank Bell prize for Learning Teaching. I'm thrilled to be Adrian Underhill's publisher. So many teachers have benefited from his training courses, workshops and seminars, and now the essence of his approach exists in book form. Joachim Appel's Diary will surely not be his only publication.

TW. How did you get into your job?

JF. I got my first job in publishing in 1978, after a degree in Language and Linguistics. I joined Heinemann in 1982. I'm interested in language and education, but I never wanted to be a teacher so publishing really suits me. Commissioning is the best job in publishing. You can direct the publishing programme but still work very closely with the authors, helping them to shape their material into a book.

TW. Thanks Jill!

Jill Florent is Exams and Methodology Publisher at Heinemann ELT. She is married to Simon Greenall and they live in Oxford with their two sons.For more information about Heinemann's Methodology list or if you would like to submit a proposal, contact Jill Florent, Heinemann ELT, Halley Court, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8EJ.email jill.florent a)bhein.rel.co.uk. See HELT on the world wide web at http:/ /www.heinemann.co.uk. Join the HELT network.

*Originally Evaluating and Selecting EFL Materials

References

Teaching reading skills in a foreign language-Christine Nuttall

Discover English-Rod Bolitho and Brian Tomlinson

Choosing your coursebook-Alan Cunningsworth

Source book for teaching EFL-Michael Lewis and Jimmie Hill

Teacher development series

Learning teaching-Jim Scrivener

Inside teaching-Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks

Sound foundations (and chart+guide)-Adrian Underhill

The ELT manager's handbook-Graham Impey and Nic Underhill

Readings in TD-Katie Head and Pauline Taylor

European language classroom series

Diary of a language teacher-Joachim Appel

Towards teaching-Colin Campbell and Hanna Kryszewska

Changing perspectives in T.Ed. Peter Medgyes et al

Open frontiers-Wout de Jong

Handbooks for the classroom series

Assessment-Michael Harris and Paul McCann

Project work-Ramon Ribe and Nuria Vidal

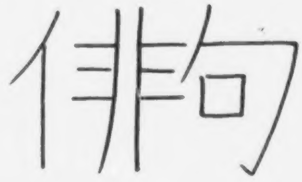
Planning classwork-Sheila Estaire and Javier Zanon

Storytelling- Juan Jesus Zaro and Sagrario Salaberri

Collected papers series

Teachers develop teachers research-eds. Julian Edge and Keith Richards

Challenge and change in language teaching-eds. Jane and Dave Willis



Haiku-Idea

If you work in a situation where trainees watch each other teach and then have group feedback together, try this:

Each trainee who has taught writes three different things on three different slips of paper. Each thing starts with "I did..." or "I didn't...". For example a trainee might write on one slip, "I didn't really answer the question about "too cheap" very well" and another "I was much slicker with the tape recorder today" or "I made a mess of the groupwork". If the trainees don't know each others handwriting, all the slips can go straight on the floor. Otherwise, you'll need to re-write or type them quickly.

Once all the slips are on the floor, people mill around and read them all. They guess which teacher wrote which slip and why. Discussion ensues.

Thanks to Tim Hahn for this one.

The Hidden History of a Lesson *or* Who Trained Me?

by Mario Rinvolucri, Pilgrims and SEAL

This article outlines a two hour lesson halfway through a three week general English course for business and professional people (lower intermediate to advanced) and offers you my current awareness of where the elements of this lesson came from in terms of my professional learning past. I suspect so far I have only gone back as far as the Mario Bronze age – there will be a lot of lithic strata (neo/paleo) that I don't have useful conscious knowledge of. So, for example, there is nothing in this article about the influence on me of my own teachers, either in school or elsewhere. We know from Ephraim Weintroub and Jim Wingate's work (see references) that a person's own teachers are inevitably the first and maybe most powerful teacher trainers in her professional life.

The archaeology of a lesson

The stages of the lesson

1. (15 minutes) When the learners came in they found a letter addressed to DEAR EVERYBODY waiting for them on their tables. I wrote this letter (everybody got the same one) in answer to letters the students had written to me over the weekend. My letter to the students quoted from and responded to things they had written to me. It was a sort of socialisation of their letters to me. The students read the Dear E. letter with the help of dictionaries and with me available if needed.

Diary entries

Diary entry 1

Ten years ago I used to wonder a lot about the difference in mood and mask between just before the lesson started and just after. When the students come into the room and start reading a text addressed to them, the "lessons" start in tune with the students' individual rhythms. I have used this beginning for FCE classes, that have to do plenty of reading and writing, for around three years, ever since Nicky Burbidge, Sheila Levy, Peta Gray and I started writing a book about the use of letters (OUP '96).

The idea of writing a letter to DEAR EVERYBODY that quotes from individual student letters was inspired by observing social cohesion in Japanese women groups. They gave me the courage to socialise student text this way. Sue Leather and Peta Gray, colleagues at Cambridge Academy, alerted me to the danger of insensitive editorialising – I resisted them at the time but later learnt they were sometimes, somehow right! The simplest solution is to ask students to tell me in their letters which bits are not for public consumption. A lot of people have helped me come to work with this technique.

2. (6-7 minutes) While the students were still coming in I overheard Juanjo talking to Monica about a trip to London. At one point he asked:

"I must tell to you now?"

I quietly wrote this up on the board and then wrote a grammar corrected version underneath followed by several socio-linguistically less abrupt ways of saying roughly the same thing.

When heads emerged up out of the letter-reading I talked Juanjo through my blackboard notes, and explained how UK English needs loads of softeners to make the listener feel unaggressed.

Diary entry 2

The idea of doing classwork around students' "unofficial" talk, talk that occurs in the classroom but before the lesson begins, was something I read about in John Fanselow's BREAKING RULES. He suggests evaluating students stuff they say when they are unaware they are being observed (very fair and unfair).

Is this technique, as I use it, licit teacher behaviour, trespassing as it does across the boundaries Erving Goffman has so brilliantly described and analysed in PRESENTATION OF SELF IN EVERDAY LIFE?

I see Kuniko's flashing eyes furiously accusing me last autumn:

"Mario you are not a proper teacher – you don't correct us in class, you refuse to correct our letters to you, and then you listen to private conversation and correct us in front of whole group. Mario, I need a teacher, I need a real teacher."

How important the Kunikos and Sue Leathers are if I want to get beyond where I am. (The people who blow a whistle an think!")

3. (10 minutes) Two days before I had asked the group to do homework on modals. I gave them three short extracts form Sei Shonagon's Pillow Book in which she writes of the way she thinks various things should be, eg:

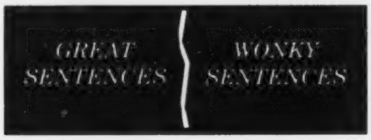
"Oxen should have very small foreheads with white hair; their underbellies, the ends of their legs and the tips of their tails should also be white......"

I had asked the students to write about what they thought things or people should/ought to be like.

Their writing had a strong whiff of the style of the 10th century Japanese courtesan – amazing how contagious her elegant thought patterns are.

From this homework I picked out some excellent sentences and some flawed ones and put them in large writing on strips of paper. I gave each learner two of the strips and some blu-tak.

I divided the board into two areas:



I sat as near to the board as I could, looking up at it. The students crowded round and stuck their sentences the side of the board they thought correct.

I then talked to MYSELF, but out loud, about the placing of the sentences. I moved them when necessary from one side to the other.

I explained to myself why I thought a given student had made a mistake etc......

4. (50 minutes) For homework each learner had been asked to write 30 questions addressed to herself, the answers to which could be of interest to others.

I asked the folk to take a partner they felt like working with for about 45 minutes and to spread out around a large room adjacent to our classroom. Person A then put the questions that she had written to herself to her partner, who answered them in terms of his life and experience.

The voice levels in the pairs were low and rather intimate. The pauses between utterances were long for a European group. All of those 8 people gave visual signs of being intensely with their partner.

Dilemma: in a student-to-teacher feedback session last week they told me to correct them a lot more. Should I go and listen in on the pairs. It felt wrong.

First I did concentrated visual (but not auditory) observation of each pair from two different spots in the room.

Diary entry 3

I learnt the idea of learners bathing in powerful text before writing stuff of their own under its influence from Alan Maley. It was in Barcelona in 1989 and he gave us marvellous French texts to write out from. I have never written such rich and excellent French. And these students have fallen, likewise, under Sei Shonagon's spell.

She, too, is in the classroom. To me she is my wife's elder sister – they are so alike, despite a millenium gap. Both are outwardly shy, inwardly strong, arrogant and brilliantly perceptive.

John Barnett, you are here too. As I crouch at the blackboard surrounded by students, you are my model. You taught me this technique and it is so much you, that when I use it I become you briefly. I am tall and strongly built – I smile a lot and think carefully before I speak – I only say a well selected bit of what I have thought. (In reality Mario is short and fat!) I used to feel guilty about this chameleon-like ability to virtually impersonate other teachers in class...... it seemed very dishonest and spineless. Herbert Puchta, about five years ago, saw me imitating him in front of a group (I was standing and moving like him). I "confessed" what I had been concious of doing – his reframe was perfect:

"I am delighted to be of use to you" or words to that effect.

Since Herbert somehow gave me permsission I have been a much happier interioriser of others, chameleon...... or what you will.

Diary entry 4

Yes, this writing to yourself and then using the questions on others used to be one of my "inevitable" exercises – I did it with all groups, suitable or not!

It was Carlos Maeztu, my most powerful trainer in the 1970's who mentioned the exercise to me and gave me the Foreign Language Class room by Moskowitz, in which he had found the exercise.

I have hardly used the exercise at all over the past few years. I wonder why? Is is because powerful voices around me currently have warned me to careful of Moskowitz's bull-in-china-shop use of therapy stuff in FL teaching? The major voice here is that of Bernard Dufeu, who is currently one of my main trainers, though I am more dissociated from him technically than from previous guiding voices. He has greater knowledge than some of my inner mentors and yet I give myself more independence from him than I ever had vis a vis Lou Spaventa, Carlos Maeztu, Cecilia Bartoli (Silent Way trainer), John Morgan (collaborator and major influence). Is it something about Bernard and my chemistries or is it to do with feeling more self-standing, more needful of independence? Ich weiss nicht .

continued →

I had a lull and began to feel lonely. I wanted to be in on the action, if only the group had been an uneven number I could have joined in! Why hadn't I turned a pair into a threesome so I could join in?

I went and got them their normal mid-lesson break soft drink and did a waiter pirouette around the group. I had become functional a gain – what a relief.

I then went into a corner and began mentally dreaming the ideas that are coming together under your eyes in the this article.

5. (40 minutes) In one of the letters mentioned above there was a horrific, throat-catching description in which the writer, Isabel, relived the days of a terrible fire near her town, Manresa, in Catalunya. The writing was so good I wanted everybody to read it.

I opened this last part of our two hour lesson by telling the group a fire-story of my own that naturally introduced some of the words that were to come up later in other people's own fire tales, phrases like a plume of smoke / a fire alarm / fireman / fire engine / sparks / to crackle etc...

We then read photocopies of Isabel's fire text (which I had lightly corrected).

These first two fire stories provoked a series of other stories from other people in the group, stories in which the same area of expression and vocabulary was recycled.

Tail-pieces

The notes above arose because students got so involved in teacher-exclusive pair-work that I set to musing.

I wonder what you, dear reader, do in your training or language classroom when pairs go on working for long intense periods of time ?

What are your inner monologues like? Are they useful to you?

Would noting their own inner monologues be useful to your trainees, especially if you are working with experienced, inset folk?

Why not ask your trainees to share their inner monologues with readers of THE TEACHER TRAINER? A boost for them to be writing for us lot, I'd've thought.

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Vol 7. No. 3.

J. Wingate, "Interactive Books" in The Teacher Trainer
Vol 1. No. 1.

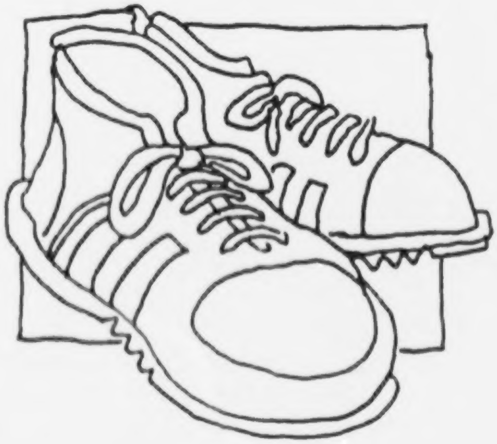
Diary entry 5

Morgan and I published a little unit on using "fire stories" in ONCE UPON A TIME" as far back as 1984. I often use this topic in language classes, knowing, though, that I risk sailing close to the wind – such stories can be as traumatic to members of the group as witnessing UK criminal law court proceedings often is.

Usually I "impose" the fire topic, from the dias of my blind teacher power. In this group Isabel spontaneously devoted a whole letter to the topic and so, for the first time in a dozen years I had been given permission from someone in the group to bring the topic up.

Do coursebook writers often think in terms of permission from the students? They have to think permission-wise about editors, inspectors, Ministries of Education, heads of Dept, teachers, parents etc.... but how about permission from the learners?

Mario's trainers?



LANGUAGE MATTERS

Reflecting linguistic change

David Crystal

For language teachers, linguistic change is both a necessity and a nuisance. It is a necessity, because only by paying close attention to linguistic change can we guarantee our students an encounter with language which is realistic, relevant, and up-to-date. But it is a nuisance, because the arrival of new forms can mean the departure of old ones, and this raises the twin spectres of rethinking well-established lesson content and of fostering a positive attitude towards relearning in the student. The only consolation – if consolation it is – is that linguistic change is unavoidable, an intrinsic feature of language, deep-rooted in its social milieu. Try to stop linguistic change, as purist commentators recommend Canutely, and you have to stop social change. It is easier to stop the tide coming in.

If change were over and done with, in a moment, the situation would not be so bad. This does occasionally happen. On October 3 1957, no-one – apart from a few scientists – had heard of the word sputnik. On October 4 1957 it was everywhere. Vocabulary change is, sometimes, like that – sudden and definitive. Unfortunately, most forms of linguistic change take time to become established – often months, and very often years. There is thus a period of uncertainty and indecision, from the time when we first encounter a new form – a new pronunciation, a new grammatical construction, a new word or meaning – to the time when we can make confident normative judgments about how it is used. And during this time it is not possible to give a straight answer to a straight question. Student: 'How do you say X?' Teacher: 'It depends.' Or even: 'Don't know'.

Predicting Change

There are in fact hundreds of points of usage in a language where the only possible – let alone honest – answer is to say 'don't know'. The point is that nobody knows. What level on the beach will the incoming tide reach tomorrow? Will the wavelets hit that pebble? Who can say? It depends on the wind, on whether something unusual has happened deep out in the ocean, on ripples set up by a group of jetski enthusiasts – or maybe someone will simply move the pebble. All of these influences have their parallels in language. Oceans do not stop the pressures of linguistic change, as the impact of American English on the languages of Europe has repeatedly shown.

Language change is as unpredictable as the tides. We all recognize our linguistic past, but it is never possible to predict our linguistic future. Try it. Which phrases will become a cliche next year. What will be the top Christian names in the year 2000? Which words will be the next ones to be affected by a stress shift (of the controversy – controversy type)? Which prefix or suffix is going to be the next to generate new vogue words (as happened to mega- and -friendly in the 1980s)? We can always tell when it's happened. With linguistic change, it's only possible to be wise after the event.

Change in Vocabulary

The reason why linguistic change is so unpredictable is that it is in the hands of so many people. In their minds, rather. And it is such an unconscious process. In the case of English, we are talking about some 400 million mother-tongue minds, plus an equivalent number of second-language minds. No single person can make a planned, confident impact on such masses. Individuals have sometimes tried with vocabulary – deliberately inventing a new word, and trying to get it established in the language. Just occasionally, it works: blurb is a good example, invented by US humorist Gelett Burgess earlier this century. Most of the time it doesn't. No one knows why, in the 15th century, the newly created words meditation and prolixity eventually came into the language, but abusion and tenebrous did not.

The books of new words, published from time to time, show the hazardous future of neologisms very well. Take the one edited by John Ayto in 1989, the Longman Register of New Words. It contained about 1200 new words or meanings which had been used in various spoken or written sources between 1986 and 1988 – words like chatline, cashless, and chocoholic. But how many of these will become a permanent part of English? It is too soon to say, though already several seem very dated: do people still say cyberphobic? do they still chicken-dance? did condom fatigue (analogous to compassion fatigue) or cluster suicide ever catch on?

In an article written for the International Journal of Lexicography in 1993, 'Desuetude among new English words', John Algeo studied 3,565 words which had been recorded as newly entering the language between 1944 and 1976. He found that as many as 58% of them were not recorded in dictionaries a generation later, and must thus be presumed to have fallen out of use. As he says: 'Successful coinages are the exception; unsuccessful ones the rule, because the human impulse to creative playfulness produces more words than a society can sustain'.

Change in Grammar

If it is difficult being definite about change in vocabulary, it is next to impossible to be definite about the much rarer changes which take place in grammar. These changes are in any case extremely slowly moving, and restricted to very small points of grammatical construction. There hasn't been a major change in English grammar for centuries. It is of course always possible to tell which grammatical features are in the process of change,

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because these are the cases which give rise to controversies over usage, and people will write to The Daily Telegraph or Radio Times about them. Contentious contemporary examples include the use of the past tense vs the present perfect (I've just eaten vs I just ate), the shifting uses of auxiliary verbs (such as may vs might or usedn't to vs. didn't use to), and the variations in noun number in such words as formula, data, and criteria. Not all points of grammatical usage reflect linguistic change, though. People have been complaining about the split infinitive for about 200 years, but the use of that construction is found well before the first prescriptive grammars were written, and will continue well after the last ones go out of print.

A Dynamic View of Language

There is only one certainty, and this is that language will always be changing. If so, then it would seem sensible to replace any static conception we may have of language by a dynamic one. A static view ignores the existence of change, tries to hide it from the student, and presents students with a frozen or fossilized view of language. Once a rule is prescribed, no alternatives to it are tolerated. A dynamic view of language is one which recognizes the existence of change, informs the student about it, and focuses on those areas where change is ongoing.

And where is all this change? It is to be found in variation – in the alternative usages to be encountered in all domains of linguistic life. International and intranational regional and social accents and dialects, occupational varieties, features which express contrasts of age, gender, and formality , features which distinguish speech from writing – these are the potential diagnostic points for future linguistic change. The more we can increase students' awareness of contemporary language variation, therefore, the more we can give them a foundation for understanding and accepting linguistic change. The title of a contemporary academic journal suggests the interdependence of these notions: Language Variation and Change.

What Language Teachers Can Do

Many teachers, at least some of the time, try to hold a mirror up to (linguistic) nature – to let students see something of the organized chaos which is out there. This is as it should be. Trying to protect students from it, by pretending it isn't there, does no-one any service. We need to find ways of reflecting it, but at the same time filtering it, so that students are not dazzled by the spectrum of alternatives which are part of sociolinguistic reality. In many cases in grammar and pronunciation, the choice is fairly straightforward, between just two alternatives, such as British vs American or formal vs informal. I do not accept the conventional wisdom that students will be 'confused' by being told about both. Contrariwise, I do believe that to distort reality, by pretending that the variation does not exist, is to introduce a level of artifice which brings difficulties sooner or later. And it may be sooner. Adopting a dynamic perspective is not just desirable; it is urgent. The reason is that the pace of linguistic change, at least for spoken English, is increasing. As English comes to be adopted by more and more people around the world, an unprecedented range of new varieties has emerged (chiefly since the 1960s) to reflect new national identities. The differences between British and American English pronunciation, for example, are minor compared with those which distinguish these dialects from the new intra-national norms of, say, Indian and West African English. When the English speakers of these countries numbered only a few tens of thousands, there was no threat to the traditional British or American models. But now that there are almost as many people speaking English in India as there are in Britain, an unfamiliar factor has entered the equation. What effect this will have on the balance of (linguistic) power, it is too soon to say – but the way that Caribbean rapping spread around the globe in the 1970s and the way that Australian English has travelled through media programmes in the 1980s shows that even relatively small dialect populations can have an influence out of proportion of their size.

None of this has yet had any real impact on standard written English, as encountered in print. There is very little difference, for example, in the language of newspapers printed in Britain, the USA, Australia, or India. But as far as speech is concerned, and informal speech in particular, the future is one of increasing variety, and thus change. The sooner we prepare our students to cope with this diverse new world, the better.

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Micro-Planning: A New Technique in In-service Training

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The aims of this training technique are:

1. to increase the probability of the transfer of an innovation from the training session into classroom practice
2. to check participants' understanding of the new teaching skill.

Attitudes towards innovation

Ten propositions underlie the approach (1):

1. A taught thing does not necessarily become a learnt one.
2. Many committed and serious teachers feel resistance to innovation.
3. Many teachers feel that when they peer-teach or teach in front of their peers their teaching and their mastery of language are being evaluated.
4. Every new element seems simpler after you have experienced it.
5. When an individual makes a personal investment in something, the sense of ownership makes him/her feel more favourably towards it.
6. When the need for change comes from inside an individual, s/he is more likely to change than when the change is externally imposed.
7. Two (or more) heads working together are better than one.
8. Working in groups increases boldness and shares responsibility.
9. Exchanges of classroom experience between teachers favour successful innovation.
10. The teacher trainer should attract the experienced (and sometimes resistant) teachers towards innovation, not confront them.

On the basis of these beliefs, here is a procedure which I have found useful in introducing new teaching techniques to experienced teachers.

Micro-planning: Steps

1. The new teaching skill is presented to participants (through demonstration/video/tapescript/other means).

Objective: To give a model of the teaching behaviour concerned.

2. Participants discuss the teaching skill (reflect on presentation, aims in using it, pros and cons).

Objective: To understand the theory behind the skill.

3. Trainer and participants may agree on a checklist/evaluation sheet/list of Do's and Don'ts (optional).

Objective: To offer participants a support for future work.

4. Participants are divided into working groups (AAA, BBB, CCC, etc.). Each group is given a type of lesson/topic/text. They plan a short lesson sequence of the required type or on the required text or topic, in which they include the teaching skill presented in the workshop. N.B. The groups can be formed at random or according to participants' interests.

Objective: To reinforce the necessary behaviours; to check understanding; to exploit teachers' classroom and planning experience; to share experience.

5. The participants are re-grouped into feedback groups, each of which comprises a member from each of the working groups (ABC, ABC, ABC, etc.). Participants in turn present their micro-plans to the others, who comment and make suggestions. Objective: To increase each individual's sense of ownership of the micro-plan his/her working group has produced; to improve the micro-plans; to get acquainted with other possibilities.
6. Outside the training session, in the classroom, each teacher tries out his/her group's plan in one of their own classes.

Objective: To learn by doing; to try out the new skill when they are ready; to ensure a safe environment for experimenting (without the embarrassment of teaching in front of peers).

7. At the next training session, each participant reports back on his/her experience with the new skill and evaluates its usefulness. N.B. This might be the right moment for "trouble shooting".

Objective: To clarify any problems that might come up; to link theory with classroom practice; to encourage teachers to evaluate innovations.

Reasons for using micro-planning in in-service training

1. It gives a better chance of the transfer of new teaching skills into practice, because:
- it empowers the participants
- it uses the strengths of group work
- it encourages personal investment
2. It provides a means of checking understanding without sounding patronising.
3. It uses the expertise of experienced teachers in translating a plan into a viable lesson (which is not something we can assume with pre-service trainees).
4. It enables the teacher trainer to work with heterogeneous groups, i.e. experienced and less experienced teachers.
5. It saves lesson planning time for the participants, particularly if the micro-plans are all based on a textbook that the participants use in their classes.
6. It ensures a non-threatening environment for participants to try out the new skill but still ensures that they will do so.

I have found this a useful technique and would be glad to hear if other colleagues do so too. It would also be interesting to learn of any variants on it.

Footnote

(1) For some of these ideas I am indebted to David Carver of Moray House College, Edinburgh.

OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK

Using Unseen Observations for an In-service Teacher Development Programme

by Phil Quirke

Introduction

Many in-service teacher development programmes use observation by trainers of teachers' classes. The frequent negative reactions of teachers to such observations "all seem to stem from the observer's failure, either intentionally or not, to recognise and to affirm the teacher's experience." (Freeman 1982:28) And it is all too often that the traditional observation approach is viewed with hostility and even fear. Five teachers who were involved in a course of 'unseen observations' (see later) I ran in Abu Dhabi had similarly negative feelings about being observed:

"A hard won relationship can be lost with outsiders in the classroom."

"Big brother is watching you."

"I have always felt that observations had the cart before the horse. Shouldn't less experienced teachers be observing their seniors rather than vice-versa?"

"I feel very self-conscious and there is always a fear of embarrassment if things go wrong." "Observations are really a bit of a charade as both teacher and pupils are usually on their best behaviour."

Negative reactions such as these result in an atmosphere which is not conducive to staff development. An additional disadvantage of observations is that "an observer may never be able to observe a natural, undisturbed lesson, because the teacher may well conduct his lessons differently and this in turn will effect how the learners react." (van Lier 1988:39) A visited class can never be a true representation of the teacher's usual practice because the classroom dynamics and interactions will always be affected by the presence of another person.

The answer to these problems seems to be **not** to visit the class. The trainer does not go into the lesson but listens to the teachers' version of it after the event. S/he sees the class through the eyes of the teacher and relies on the teacher as a professional. This type of observation is known as 'unseen observation' (Rinvolucri 1988 & 1989). Rinvolucri takes the idea of unseen observation from Moreno's psychodrama and the caring professions as the idea is exactly parallel to the normal way a therapy supervision operates. A supervisor in the caring professions does not 'sit-in' on a real-life event but listens to the practitioner's account of it afterwards.

My Experience Using Unseen Observations

After trying a few isolated 'unseen observation' lessons with teachers in Venezuela in 1992, I set up a course of 'unseen observations' in Abu Dhabi working with up to nine teachers over periods of five months from January 1993 to May 1994. The reason for deciding on a whole course was that the questions raised during isolated observations were seldom followed up. By structuring the number of 'unseen observations' over a period of time it allowed teachers to focus on their teaching as a form of continuous and supported development.

Our course of 'unseen observations' contained 5 main phases; pre-course discussion, pre-lesson discussion, the lesson unseen, feedback and post-course discussion.

Step 1: Pre-course discussion.

The trainer discusses the teacher's approach to their teaching and the methodological principles which underpin this approach. Even inexperienced teachers can explain why they do what they do even though they may be unaware of how this ties into theoretical principles or may lack the vocabulary to express this. The purpose is to find out what the teacher's philosophy of teaching is, what strategies they employ, what learning tasks and activities they make use of, and how they use them. "The teacher's experience and perceptions of the teaching situation form the basis for the collaborator's work in development." (Freeman 1989:41)

It is accepted that teachers have their own theories of language and learning and it is made clear to them that the course of 'unseen observations' aims to make those theories explicit. The central issue is not only to observe "***How*** do I teach?", but to decide "**Why** do I teach what I teach?" and "**Why** do I teach the way I do?".

The trainer can help the teacher focus on specific points and decide how they will recall those points. The points to focus on could include areas such as interactive roles in the classroom, boardwork, teacher language, etc. The strategies for aiding recall can include diaries, recordings, transcripts or self reports (see Richards 1990:125-37). However, it is probably most useful to allow teachers to adapt and develop their own strategies.

Here are four points of focus taken from teachers I worked with in Abu Dhabi at a military technical school for young Arab cadets:

1.To develop presentation techniques which cover the material in a more culturally appropriate way and which involve more student participation.

2.To use more communicative activities based on oral work with slow, unmotivated students unused to a learner based classroom.

3.To more closely integrate the teaching of English with the technical subjects being taught at the institute.

4.To decrease the students' dependence on the teacher and develop their learning strategies.

The pre-course discussion stresses the importance of allowing the teachers to work on areas they are interested in, in a supportive and unthreatening atmosphere and over a series of lessons and discussions.

Step 2: Pre-lesson discussion.

The teacher talks the trainer through the planned lesson and the reasoning behind each stage. The trainer's role is to listen, not to judge. If the teacher is struggling to find appropriate activities, it is possible to give them a set of alternatives, some of which may have worked for you.

Each teacher is given a list of questions to concentrate on during the lesson. These questions lead up to a focus on 'why' and aim to aid the teacher's objective recall. They are worked out with the teacher and differ for each case. For example three questions which ran through the course of the teacher dealing with point 4 above were:

"Which student shows the most dependence on you?"

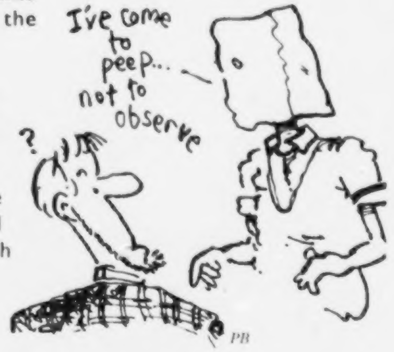
"How is this dependence expressed?"

"Why do you think this student is so dependent upon you as his teacher?"

The first two questions act as a lead up to the third question which was the main focus of the teacher's work during this course.

The trainer's role is one of listener and clarifier. They encourage the teacher to voice their teaching ideas and put them into practice, thereby hopefully promoting the teacher's decision making skills and allowing the teacher to gain new insights into the behaviour of the class.

These questions and the active role of the teacher mean that they know how the feedback session will run before they teach the lesson.


I've come to peep... not to observe
?
PB

Step 3: The lesson unseen.

The teacher teaches the lesson. Several of the teachers in Abu Dhabi said that they felt as though they were being observed but without the worry if something should go wrong. All of them said that the first two stages enabled them to look at what they were doing during the lesson much more objectively. Teachers are given the opportunity to look at and become aware of what is actually happening in the class.

Step 4: Feedback.

The teacher recalls the lesson, trying to arrive at a realistic picture of what happened. The trainer guides the teacher to describe the lesson and not judge it. Often this simple process of description provides the teacher with several insights to their attitudes and beliefs of language and learning. As Wallace has noted (1991:53) reflective discussion is a difficult concept and parameters should be set in order to keep the discussion focused. These parameters are, in practice, the points set by the teacher in the pre-course discussion, even though we need to realise that these are flexible. All of the teachers in Abu Dhabi said that they found the recall phase difficult but agreed that it got easier during the course.

The teacher suggests possible areas for development and future focus. If necessary the trainer can guide the teacher back to previously raised questions but ultimately the teacher must feel that they have generated the impetus to continue.

The trainer can help the teacher put the suggestions in a wider perspective in a number of different ways. I feel it is important to list all of those that have come up in the courses I have run to date:

1.Advice on reading.

2.Any number of different observational procedures in the teacher's or a colleague's classroom either alone or with a peer observing and possibly using the teacher's own observation system and/or video and audio recordings of lessons (see for example: Allwright 1988, Richards & Nunan 1990).

3.Experimenting with other classroom methods and techniques. e.g. Silent Way, CLL, etc.

4.Both student and teacher diaries.

5.Workshops run by teachers.

6.Group discussions among teachers with similar interests.

7.Articles for an in-house newsletter or TEFL journals.

In practice these feedback sessions melded with the pre-discussion phase for the next lesson. When the two did not meld, the teacher always suggested a time for the pre-lesson discussion to be held. Too often feedback sessions tend to halt after the trainer's review of the lesson, and no positive arrangements are made for the future (Sheal 1989:101). I have found that the structure of the course of 'unseen observations' ensures that the teacher and trainer work together towards future objectives.

Step 5: Post-course discussion.

At the end of the course of 'unseen observations' it is equally important that there is a final meeting where the teacher can give feedback on the course and where the trainer can suggest ways in which the teacher's development can progress. From those teachers who participated on the first course in Abu Dhabi,

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four started another course of 'unseen observations' the following semester, four began a Diploma in TEFLA and the final teacher went to England to take an MA in TEFL.

Conclusion

Teacher development can only be assured if backed by a continuous programme of in-service support, the foundation of which could be an 'unseen observation' scheme. The starting point for any such support must be those issues, both theoretical and practical, which the teacher finds problematic. This approach gives the trainer a novel view of a teacher's professional attitudes and beliefs, and gives the necessary overview to mould a group of teachers into a cohesive team of researching professionals.

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Breaking down barriers: The adjustment of immigrant teachers to new educational frameworks

Background

Since 1990, Israel has absorbed approximately half a million former Soviet citizens, or almost ten percent of its population. Immigration is more than geographical transition; for many it is a major emotional upheaval, verging on trauma. The older one is, the more difficult and mountainous the transition is. Movement from a rigid centralised society to a democratic free for all framework such as Israel can upset the strongest of nerves, without even taking into account the cultural, language and economic problems normally besetting each newcomer.

Besides the thousands of doctors, engineers and musicians clamouring for work, there have been a large number of former ELT teachers. After a series of tests and interviews those meeting the appropriate criteria (proficiency, experience and EFL understanding) have joined reorientation courses which deal with aspects of linguistics, methodology, education and classroom observation and teaching. Over a period of four years over 750 former Soviet teachers have been retrained and at least half that number are now teaching within the state school system (approximately 8% of the TEFL population).

Being a beginner again

The first and most daunting experience for the re-trainee is the thought of being a beginner once more. The re-trainees come from a wide variety of backgrounds, from university and specialised language institutes to elementary schools, from Moscow and St. Petersburg to Baku, Tashkent and Novo Sibersk. They have all been accustomed to their own specific niches in the system of EFL teaching and here they are requested to reconsider and re-evaluate everything they have ever done and integrate into a vastly different system.

In the initial stages it was noticed that re-trainees felt that their past experience had been invalidated and their own knowledge devalued. The immediate emotional reaction was a loss of professional confidence and depression. "In Leningrad, the pupils loved me, but here I am afraid to go into the classroom". Unlike genuine beginners, these re-trainees have had a frame of experience to refer to and feel threatened by the new situation By having to re-evaluate past experience and methods and at times having to discard well-loved or well-worn tools as inappropriate, professional self image seemed to be undermined and dented. Amongst tools which had to find a different place in the practitioner's bag of tricks were the use and teaching of grammar and the downgrading of the importance of translation or L1 in the class.

One of the ways to contend with this situation was to emphasise to all course participants the continuity of the process: the building of new walls on old and solid foundations "You all have something to contribute and we will all benefit from your past experience".

New teacher roles

From conversations with former Soviet teachers, it appears that much teaching was teacher centred with the teacher as fount of knowledge and wisdom whereas education in Israel seems to be pupil centred with the needs of the learner uppermost. Whereas previously the teacher set the pace and the standard for study, the teacher here has to be aware of and accommodate the varying needs of pupils. This change of emphasis often seems to unnerve teachers and leave them stranded, uncertain of which course to adopt and how to do this effectively.

The experience of many of these re-trainees included dependence on a centrally devised curriculum and study plan which guided teachers as to which books to use for which grade, how to teach and when to teach what. On the other hand, the Israeli teacher is expected to be familiar with the wide variety of approved textbooks available for a particular grade and is usually party to the choice of the year's textbooks together with the department head. In addition, most teachers are autonomous once they enter their classrooms. The pace and content of coverage depend to a large extent upon the individual teacher. The newcomer is expected to be conversant with the syllabus, possess expertise and deliver the goods without external intervention or direction.

Self-belief

One newcomer declared that it was too much for her as she did not feel fully cognisant with the textbook or the curriculum. She felt that she would be unable to fulfil her moral obligations to her pupils; it was only with difficulty that she was dissuaded from resigning. The transition from being part of a centralised and planned system to greater personal responsibility and independence is a gradual process and demands understanding and guidance on the part of teacher counsellors when they are available. (The Ministry has appointed a number of teacher counsellors in major areas to assist in the support and integration of re-trainees into the new framework). The immigrant teacher should be guided by the counsellors towards a greater self tolerance and understanding.

Obviously the immigrant teacher has to relinquish something in the move to another country and culture. Status and job security are often the price paid for the new home. Many senior teachers felt despondent and diffident at the move. The initial stages and acclimatisation often seem steeply out of reach It seems clear that the more the newcomer believes in his or her self worth, the easier the initial obstacles will be overcome. A case in point was an Odessa teacher who had been a school principal and within three years after retraining had become EFL department head of her new school. Larissa had broken the barrier, never forgetting her own inner worth.

Even more than many of their Western or Israeli colleagues, the former Soviet teachers appear to believe in teaching as vocation, in their ability to play significant roles in the lives of their pupils. They often seem to regard themselves as cultural (Anglo-American) ambassadors and directors of moral values. This role was undoubtedly significant in a society where authentic exposure to English was infrequent and often rare.

Cultural missions

Those in reorientation courses complain of missing their former pupils and spoke unashamedly of loving their profession and their pupils. In answer to questions, they write that they feel that they have been deprived of the opportunity to make a cultural contribution to the lives of their pupils.

In contrast to this, the Israeli counterpart working from a communicative framework has less of a sense of cultural mission especially as Israeli youth are more exposed to English on an everyday basis, meeting tourists and watching the news in English (Sky, CNN and BBC). They encounter Anglo-American culture every day outside the class without the assistance of the teacher. The world of pop and undubbed films make this world more immediate and accessible. Israeli teachers thus see their EFL work as part of an educational task, related to a program with wider humanitarian values.

On the one hand, these retrained teachers may be surprised to find their older pupils more in contact with the world of English than they have ever been, albeit at a different level (Sting, Dire Straits and their ilk have become the pupils' springboards to the world of English). Yet, on the other hand, the former Soviet teacher brings to the classroom an uncompromising dedication and desire to import values in their educational work. This is especially true of the more experienced teachers (with ten or more years of experience) and those in their late thirties or older.

Conclusion

From an overview, it is very clear that the immigrant teacher from the former Soviet Union has major obstacles to overcome, not only on the level of methodology and pedagogy, but on the affective level as well. Acclimatisation to the new classroom may take time, demanding new approaches to teacher follow-up and the support programs already functioning; these would encourage re-trainees to a greater openness and willingness to self-exposure. Time, patience and tolerance will enable these restarters to find the appropriate niche in the Educational System and make their own unique contribution to TEFL in this country.

Ephraim Weintroub
– National Counsellor – Retraining of Immigrant Teachers, Jerusalem.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Of particular interest or relevance to trainers are the following:-

- **Teaching Children English** by David Vale and Anne Feunteun (1995) CUP ISBN 0-521-42235-3. Part One is a training course for EFL teachers who've never taught kids, primary teachers who've never taught EFL or pre-service trainees. Part Two provides notes for trainers. There's a file of activities and a reading list too. The ten units all contain stories, rhymes, songs and tasks related to a theme, such as starting lessons, visuals, content and curriculum. Thus, readers have the delightful tasks of drawing spiders, filling in speech bubbles and playing "hot potato" while discussing methodological issues. Recommended.

- **An introduction to teaching, psychological perspectives** ed. C. Desforges (1995) Blackwell ISBN 0-631-187278-8. Written for pre and in-service teachers of children of any subject. Takes as a basic premise that a major objective of teaching is learning and that planning and preparing activities and laying good social foundations are useful but only partial supplementary aims. The psychological research mentioned is jargon free and explicitly brought to bear on the practical problems teachers meet in classrooms. Not at all glib or trivial.

- **Psychology in foreign language teaching.** S. McDonough 2nd edit: (1986) Routledge ISBN 0-415-08423-7. The author looks at language teaching techniques in current use and the ideas/ theories behind them – behaviourism, information processing, memory, FLA, SLA, individual differences and motivation. Useful for its pithy summaries despite small print.

- **Distance education for language teachers** eds. Ron Howard and Ian McGrath (1995). Multilingual Matters. ISBN1-85359-291-9. A collection of fifteen papers given by modern language teachers at the University of Edinburgh, IALS, Symposium in 1993. The aim is to give those unable to attend the symposium an insight into some of the work and thinking of the major institutions concerned with distance education and language-teacher education at a distance (including the Open University, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Universities of Aston and Brighton).

- **Teachers' stories** ed David Thomas (1995) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-19254-8. This book argues for the content and process of teacher training to be enriched by the inclusion of educational biography into the usual mix of theory and practice. Although the particular stories included may not always bear on ELT teacher training the idea of interspersing narrative in training to obtain individual perspectives on life, work and career is a fruitful one.

- **Encyclopaedia of Management development methods** by Andrzej Huczynski (1983) Gower ISBN 0-566-02334-2 (H. back). Designed to provide management trainers and "educationalists" with a comprehensive compendium of learning methods from action mazes and block methods, through controlled discussion and encounter groups to visiting lecturers and workshops. Each entry summarises the essence of the technique and details further reading.

- **Women in educational management** ed. Jenny Ozga (1983). Open University Press ISBN 0-335-09340-X. The book contains ten accounts by women managers of their career paths and day-to-day experiences. Issues touched on are: whether women manage differently from men, gender structuring of organisations and strategies for overcoming barriers to progress. None of the papers are by women in TEFL or TESOL.

- **Verbal Hygiene** by Deborah Cameron (1995) Routledge ISBN 0-415-103555-X. A look at popular attitudes towards language and attempts to regulate its use. Instead of arguing against 'verbal hygiene' or 'political correctness' Cameron says that discussion of language values is important as a way of making sense of both language and society. The case studies on meddling with language are on: regulation of style by editors, teaching of English grammar in schools and advice to women on effective speaking.

- **A history of the English Language** by Thomas Cable (4th edition 1993) Routledge. ISBN 0-415-09379-1. Historical development of English from the Middle Ages to the present. Large, updated version includes the place of English in the world and material on regional varieties. If you're interested in old and Middle English Syntax, inkhorn vocabulary and spelling reform then this large, closely written volume is for you.

- **The English Language** by R. Burchfield (1985) Opus OUP ISBN 0-19-289161-8. Much smaller, lighter, shorter than Castle above but very easy to read despite the small print as it includes more personal opinion.

The Pilgrims/Longman resource books series had three new books out in 1995. All the books have bright distinctive covers and a recipe format. They are:

- **Planning from lesson to lesson** by T. Woodward and S. Lindstromberg ISBN 0-582-08959-X. This book takes the emphasis away from planning individual lessons as blocks of time and puts it on building activities that, once set up, roll from lesson to lesson like threads. Activities are flagged for mixed ability applications and there is a section on teacher development via lesson planning. Also has a careful, clear introduction (says me, who wrote it!).

- **Creative Questions** by Natalie Hess and Laurel Pollard ISBN 0-582-0895-81. Getting away from meaningless, classroom questions where the students know the answers or are tired of having their comprehension checked is the aim of this book. Contains about 80 questioning activities that stimulate thinking, wake people up, build esteem and help students to get to know each other as well as practising grammar and skills.

- **Business English Recipes** by Judy Irigoin and Bonnie Tsai. ISBN 0-582-08960-3. Business orientated courses can be very original and creative involving problem-solving, games, simulations and team-building exercises, if you use this book!Contains ideas for one-to-one. Provides photocopiable

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- **The Women's Travel Guide: London** by J. Barnard (1994) Virago ISBN 1-85381-691-4. If you live in, are coming to or bringing/sending teachers or students to London then this is an interesting travel guide to consult. It deals with practicalities (such as costs, language, safety), interesting places to visit (divided up by area) and has the usual accommodation, food and drink, shopping sections, but throughout, there is information on womens' contributions to history, art and culture, on travelling with friends, children or on business and on hospitality and safety. Virago Womens' travel guides also exist for Amsterdam, New York, Paris, Rome and San Francisco.

- Heinemann publishers re-issued two of their classic teacher training books in 1995. The books are now larger and thus easier to read than before. They are: **Discover English** by Rod Bolitho and Brian Tomlinson ISBN 0-435-24061-7. The second edition retains much of its sentence level focus for pre and in-service teachers to make discoveries by doing tasks with selected areas of the grammatical and lexical systems. Still highly recommended for developing an understanding that goes beyond simple, pat rules and for the discussion of the pedagogical implications of awareness raised.

- **Teaching Practice Handbook** by Roger Gower, Diane Phillips and Steve Walters ISBN 0-435-24059-5. Linked very closely now to the UCLES/RSA CTEFLA scheme, the revised version is much fuller including sections on mono and multi-lingual classes, computers and photocopiers. The 3P's take second place to skills teaching. There are also sections on learner development and giving feedback to students. Trainer-training references are woefully inadequate.

- **Learning Teaching** by Jim Scrivener (1994) ISBN 0-435-24089-7. Designed for fairly inexperienced English language teachers, this book takes a largely Stevick-like options approach to the areas of class management, planning, organising activities and observation tasks (see advert and article in this issue).

New Periodicals

Teachers and teaching theory and practice is a new journal publishing accounts of research on teachers/thinking. It's the mouth organ of the International Study Association on teacher thinking founded in 1983. In Vol. 1 No. 1 March '95 there are articles on reflection, (four, of which two are critical), narrative texts and education (2), research and teacher training and perhaps the most relevant for us on the dilemmas involved in teaching teachers. Not a TEFL journal. Two issues a year for £58. Enquiries to Prof. C. Day, University of Nottingham, U.K.

- **Journal of TESOL,** France. Comes out twice a year. Queries to Telecom Paris, 46 Rue Barrault, 75013 Paris. Vol. 2, No.1, guest edited by Roger Budd, debates the communicative approach. Is it a method? How can it be adapted to large, state-sector classes? Next issue concentrates on discourse analysis.

- **Teacher talking to teacher** is the newsletter of the JALT Teacher Education SIG. Details from Andrew Barfield, Amakubo 2-1-1-103 Tsukuba-shi, Ibaraki-ken T 305, Japan.

- **Together** Is the Romanian journal for language teacher education, described as a self-help journal for the continuous development of trainers and developers. Comes out twice a year. Details c/o The British Council, Calea Dorobantilov 14, 71132 Bucuresti, Romania: Vol.1, No.1 has articles, transcripts of visiting speakers, and conference reports.

- **Teach!** is the newsletter for teachers of English in Slovakia. Details from Liz Austin, Metodick' centrum, Horn' 97, 975 46 Bansk' Bystrica, Slovakia.

- **Perspectives** is the journal of ELT and British Studies, British Council produced, Narodni 10, 125 01 Prague 1, Czech Republic. Several articles on teacher training in most issues.

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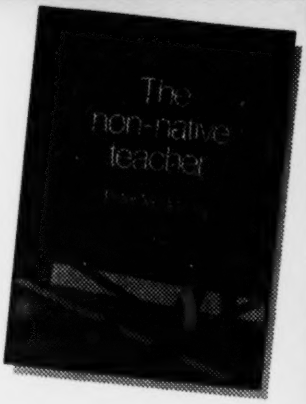
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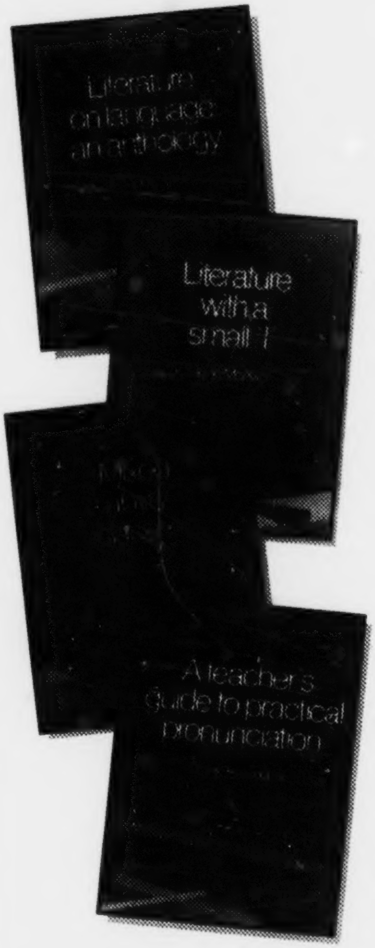
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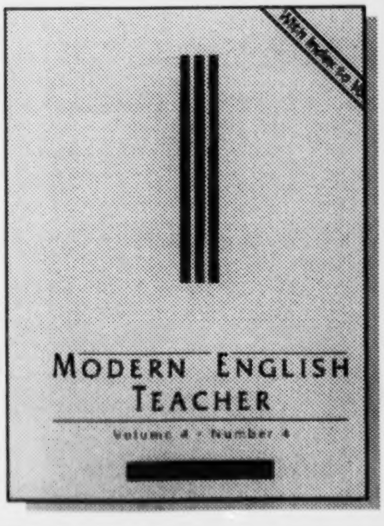
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9606	British cultural studies at university, college or school	8 July	Oxford/Glasgow
9607	Teaching with texts	12 August	Kent
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9610	Exploring spoken English: Classroom use and personal proficiency	4 July	Newcastle
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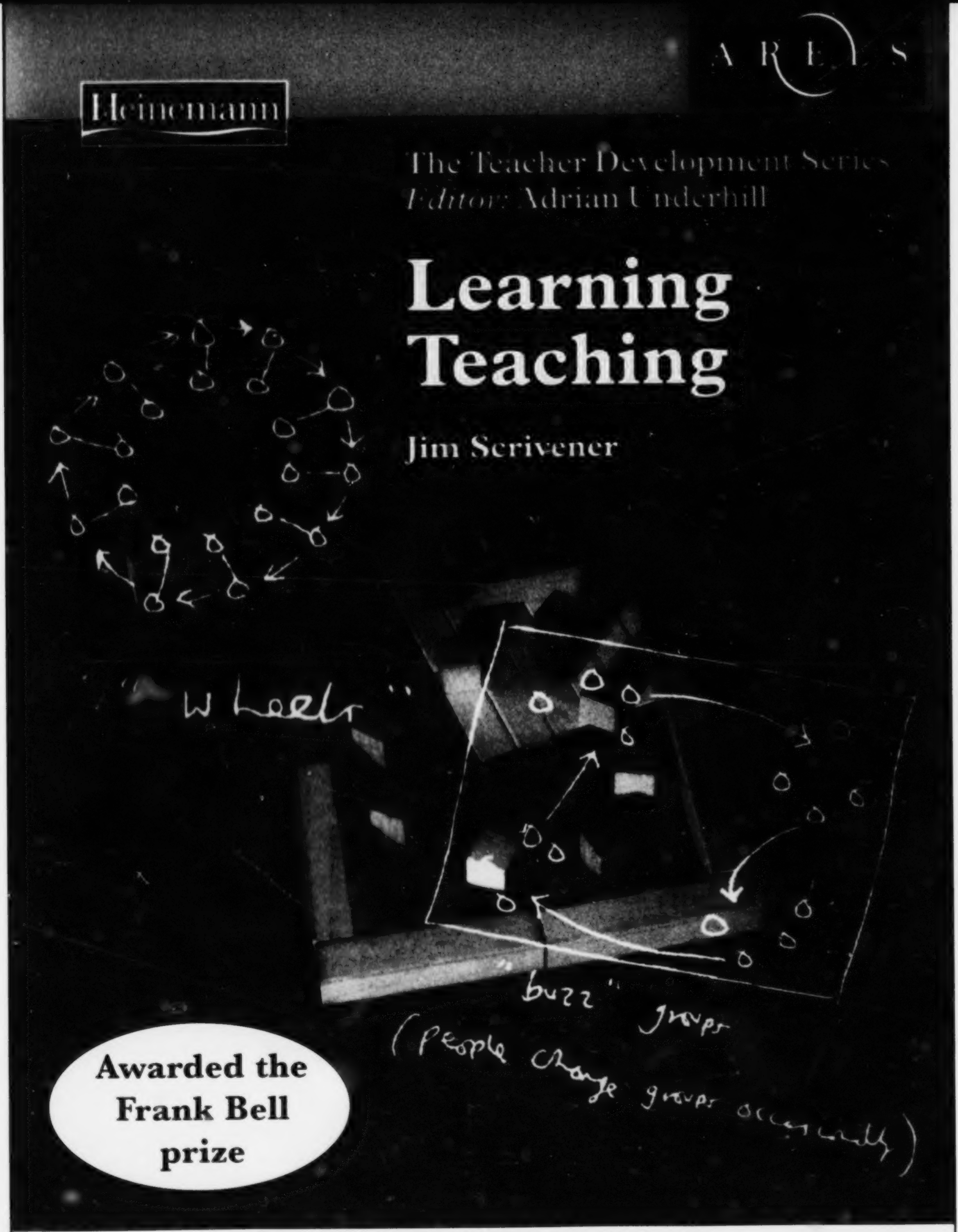

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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

"The Teacher Trainer" is a journal especially for those interested in modern language teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in a staffroom, or a Director of Studies with a room of your own, whether you are a course tutor on an exam course, or an inspector going out to schools, this journal is for you. Our aims are to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put trainers in touch with each other and to give those involved in teacher training a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate as well as building up a pool of experience within modern language teacher training.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

Editorial

This issue contains both further arguments within continuing debates and also brand new topics.

The debate over which methodological model, if any, we should train pre-service teachers to use, continues in this issue with a four-stage model from Clive Lovelock (p.3). Clive prefers contextualisation, focusing, practice and use for his model phases. Both CFPU, PPP and ARC (see Vol. 8/1) will be debated in a further article by Scott Thornbury in the next issue.

Another continuing debate is the one on including pragmatics in language awareness components of training courses. This debate, started by Peter Grundy in Volume Nine, Number Two, is taken up again in this issue by Tony Penston (p.18) who feels pragmatics should not be included!

To clear your mind of models, phases and debates try Rod Bolitho's practical warm-up idea involving the metaphor of bulging suitcases (p.7). There is more on metaphor in the observation and feedback column where Simon Marshall invites his pre-service trainees to talk about their lessons as if they were country walks (p.16). For pure common sense and a dash of iconoclasm, try Zuo Biao's article on 'control' in second language classrooms. Zuo Biao disregards the rather negative implication that the word 'control' has gradually acquired and argues that without control of themselves and their technical skills, teachers would produce careless, disorganised environments in which effective learning could not take place.

Mentors are coming into existence again these days as fashion (and a tight budget!) swings us towards school-based initial teacher training. Far from seeing mentors as second class, low-status supervisors, James Williams sees them as the future of teacher training (p.11).

Dr. Bose writes from India in this issue about some Indian problems (including classes of 120 students) and insists on local solutions (p.12). David Bell writes from Japan to report on a scheme where trainees get a second shot at their practice lessons (p.22).

As usual in The Teacher Trainer we welcome back some regular series in this issue. In Meet a Colleague we have the chance to hear Margit Szesztay, a Hungarian trainer talking about how role-swapping from group to group in her institution is a form of continuing professional development (p.14).

Language Matters, our newest column, has a contribution from John Ayto that reminds us how new words can be coined from old (p.15).

The Trainee Voices column this time adapts the idea of the "interactive dialogue journal" and shows how you can use it, if you have understanding colleagues, to gain insights into the trainee's view of training (p.17).

Add to this mixture of continuing debate, returning series, practical ideas and iconoclasm, two more voices with very definite views...on trainers' rights (p.20) and on bad observers (p.21) and you have the usual blend of the lively, free-thinking and considered that is The Teacher Trainer.

Enjoy this issue!

Tessa Woodward

Editor

Here is a sample list of subscribers:

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Letters

Dear Craig Thaine,

Your article on Timetabling in Vol. 10, No.1, made me realise that the power of what a writer says can lie in the assumptions behind the statements he makes, rather than in the statements themselves.

The assumption behind your article seems to be that a teacher on Sunday evening should know what she will be doing with her class on Friday morning, five lessons on. The assumption fills me with a mixture of amazement and hilarity. How can I possibly, of a Sunday evening, know what will make sense to me and to at least some in my learning group the following Friday morning? Is teaching about being with the learners or about being on a silly bus, some bizarre, surrealistic sequence established by somebody on God knows what grounds? It seems that you do believe in teachers planning round slabs of language "content" (I thought language was a "how" not a "what") since you write: "The written work includes a three day time table sequence of five hours per day, based around a unit of a course book, together with a connected lesson plan based on a piece of authentic material that is part of the timetable".

Where are the language learners in all this? Do groups of learners have their own cultural specificity? Do groups of learners have their own group dynamic specificity? Do groups of learners have their own language learning specificity? Craig, have you ever taught any two groups which were even vaguely alike, taking into account the above and many other variables? How can you teach your trainees to lesson plan and timetable outside the context of a given group? Even if they know the group well, how can they plan out into the 21st century (five hours ahead IS the next century, group dynamically, and in terms of learning)?

I know nothing, absolutely nothing, about the group of language learners I will meet next Monday morning. My work with them will be responsive, in the same way that a doctor is responsive with her patients. I will observe their language beliefs, skills and behaviours, run tests (that don't look like tests) – at this point I will tentatively diagnose and prescribe. I will closely watch the language and psychological results of the prescriptions (my lessons) and adjust them in the light of student reaction. At the end of the first week I will invite the students to diagnose and prescribe for the second week. I use the medical model which assumes as little as possible and works from the language and psychological here and now of the learner group.
Craig, why do you conscientiously teach your trainees to elaborate mental structures that ignore their flesh and blood, here and now learners? Why does the UCLES/RSA scheme of things often do the same?
Maybe I should have read your article and sighed.
Maybe though, it is better to confront you and so maybe read your answers.

Mario Rinvolucri

(Reply from Craig Thaine to follow)

The Post-PPP Debate: an alternative model?

Clive Lovelock, Kobe, Japan

Introduction

This article was inspired by a report by Tessa Woodward on the debate at the RSA-UCLES CertTEFLA Conference, 1993, and an article by Jim Scrivener, both of which appeared in Vol 8 # 1 of *The Teacher Trainer*. In these articles, which deal with principles behind language learning, teaching and teacher training, the Presentation, Practice and Production model of teaching and learning is questioned on many grounds, including its prescriptiveness.

I concur with the view that there should be room for a variety of models for learning and teaching. As Scrivener says, we need a generic categorization for describing – or planning – lessons regardless of which methodology they follow, or of the teacher's level of experience. This article takes up the ARC model offered by Scrivener and suggests some refinements, in an attempt to find some solid principles for lesson staging.

I would just like to comment on terminology before moving on to discuss an alternative model, which has four categories instead of Scrivener's three.

Nomenclature: Presentation, odd man out; Practice, OK; and Production ...?

While practice and production are both activities which I assume most teachers attempt to have their students engage in, presentation, in the PPP model, emphasizes not so much what the students do, as the initiating role of the teacher. The teacher selects a teaching point, demonstrates it in some context, and then highlights it for the students. While the students may, through elicitation or warm-up activities, be drawn into participation, the nature of their activity is obscured rather than described by the word 'presentation'. Firstly, while the teacher is aiming to present a teaching point, it is not the learners who present. Secondly, from the learners' point of view, during the teacher's Presentation, they engage in two distinctly separate stages: understanding the context or the concepts included in it (subsequently checked by concept questions from the teacher), and then focussing their attention on how something in the situation was said. Outside of the PPP model, these two stages, which I call Contextualization and Focussing, can be used independently of each other. Therefore, I maintain that Presentation does not belong in the same category as the other two 'P's. This is not to say that the word 'presentation' should be banned from the ELT lexicon; merely that it is not an obligatory element in a lesson, that it is something that students participate in but do not themselves do, and that it needs to be reclassified as two separate categories in a more generally applicable model. 'Production' is certainly not a set of activities one would

continued →

want to exclude from a model for lesson planning or observation. Nevertheless, even when combined with the other two 'P's, it does not constitute a very comprehensive coverage of lesson phase types (or lesson types). Where does developing the skills of reading and listening fit in? To place them under the umbrella of 'production' would seem ambivalent, given that they are commonly referred to as receptive skills, in contrast to the productive ones of speaking and writing. For this reason, I prefer 'Use'.

In this respect, Jim Scrivener's ARC model is an improvement. Authentic Use, Restricted Use, and Clarification & Focus are three activity types which can more easily be attributed to the learner. The teacher's role is to decide how, and when to get the students operating in one of these modes. While the main objective should be learning, teaching remains the means for making it possible.

Regarding Scrivener's terminology, I find Clarification & Focus a bit cumbersome and prefer just 'Focus'. We can normally expect students to focus on something for some part of a lesson, but clarification, while implied in focussing, is a result that we hope for, rather than routinely engineer. I see no particular merit in using the phrase 'Restricted Use' rather than sticking to plain old 'Practice'. The word practice is recognized universally by teachers all over the world. The particular connotation assigned to it in 'PPP' is understood in only a section of the ELT world – albeit an influential one – centred around the UK. If we do not call it 'restricted use', then the word 'authentic' becomes redundant for the third category. 'Use' is sufficient.

Towards a more universally applicable model

For the past six years or so, I have been using a model for the phases, or stages, of a lesson, which is similar to, but different from, Scrivener's. Scrivener's three categories are designed to be "applicable to all levels of experience, not only to those (trainees) in need of a simple model on a pre-service training course" and are descriptive. This wide applicability and non-prescriptiveness are most desirable for any training course because they are qualities which offer continuity, rather than being at cross-purposes, with teacher development.

The ARC model reminds me of a model proposed by Brian Tomlinson (1992), with whom I worked here in Japan for a couple of years, after I had independently developed my 4-phases model. Tomlinson's model stated that there are basically three things that students can do with language during a lesson: they can LEARN ABOUT language; they can PRACTISE language; or they can USE it. In another context , that of writing, Tomlinson calls 'use' APPLICATION (Tomlinson 1983). Learning About language seems to correspond with Scrivener's Clarification/Focus; Practising, with his Restricted Use; and Use, with Authentic Use. However, Tomlinson's categories apply not only to language learning, but also to skills development, as do mine. Scrivener, Tomlinson and I appear to have been working independently with similar ideas. My distinct contribution is that I see the need for four categories rather than three.

Four basic phase types in a lesson

The model I use consists of four, not three, components for lesson planning or analysis. I usually call them CONTEXTUALIZATION, FOCUSSING, PRACTICE and USE, but other labels could be used.

CONTEXTUALIZATION (or schema activation)

This category overlaps with presentation in the sense that it may involve introducing students to language that they have not encountered before, or have not properly mastered, in the hope that they will gain something from their encounter. However, it also differs fundamentally from PPP's 'Presentation' in that Contextualization is qualitatively separate from artificially focussing the students' attention on items of language. Furthermore, a Focussing stage does not necessarily always follow Contextualization in the non-PPP classroom. In Contextualization, the student's attention should be on global comprehension of anything and everything (including concepts, feelings, and relationships) in the 'text' provided. This is why the term 'schema activation' is often used instead of Contextualization, the idea being to arouse in the learner sensory or emotional memories, or familiar concepts, which can help place the language of the text in richly comprehensible setting. Alternatively, instead of providing a written or spoken text, schema can be activated by presenting students with non-verbal stimuli to elicit idaes and language from them. This can serve the dual role of setting the scene for a subsequent activity, and/ or providing diagnostic information as to what language points – if any – need to be focussed on.

The 'text' could be a piece of writing which the students read; it could be a conversation or monologue, recorded on audio or video tape or spoken live; it could be a mime or a video sequence with the sound turned off; it could be a picture or a set of pictures with or without written text; it could be a text provided by the students themselves, written, spoken, or drawn. It serves as fairly rich comprehensible input which carries the possibility of understanding on several levels (interpersonal roles, emotions, motives, communicative intentions/ functions, ideational notions) not to mention involving the use of different channels in the brain such as those used to process non-verbal clues: body language, setting, clothing, voice quality, layout of a written text, and so on, in addition to language processing.

Such a 'text' may be authentic, but need not be. Its purpose is for learners to comprehend the context without assistance, not to draw them into some communicative simulation (though this might be planned for later). Authentic texts are often the most suitable ones for intermediate to advanced learners, because they usually provide better contextualization than contrived texts; but some degree of simplification may be needed for lower level students. If an authentic text is too difficult for students without considerable guidance, the activity moves away from Contextualization and towards Focussing. Even for advanced students, an abridged version (or visuals accompanied by a short commentary) may be more effective than a long printed text, if the aim is simply schema activation.

Though Contextualization always involves comprehension, comprehension activities are not always aimed at Contextualization. Some may argue that comprehension exercises are really a receptive form of communicative activity, and therefore can be classified as Use. However, Use normally requires students to be interacting participants, or at least, if in the role of audience, seeking information or enjoyment for its own sake. Contextualization, specifically aimed at preparing the ground for a later classroom activity, differs from audience participation (Use stage) in that the text is being used, proactively or retroactively, as a pedagogical vehicle for creating a context , or for setting the scene to facilitate understanding in, or of, another part of the lesson. In other words, the schema which the teacher hopes will eventually be activated is pedagogical, rather than just understanding the text for its own sake. The students are probably not aware of the teacher's aim at the time, but may become so in retrospect, when the teacher focusses the attention of the class on some aspect of the text, or on some concept arising from it. The point is not whether or not the students are aware of the teacher's agenda, but whether they are creating the right kind of mental context which will help them to under stand something later in the lesson, or something not previously understood. It should also be noted that classroom comprehension activities are often aimed at Focussing (testing understanding), rather than either Contextualization or Use.

FOCUSSING (learning about/ awareness raising/ clarification)

The focus is usually on specific elements of language (grammar, pronunciation, lexis, textual organization, discourse analysis, etc), but it could also be on comprehension of specific contextual details (e.g. when the teacher asks display questions to test students' understanding or to highlight key points); on points of cultural interest (relationships, customs, manners, non-verbal communication, beliefs or values); on learning strategies; on self-evaluation. I classify tests as focussing activities – focussing on what the student knows or does not, can do or cannot. Focussing activities are usually guided or controlled. It takes a good deal of training for a learner to become autonomous enough to focus efficiently without help.

PRACTICE

As Scrivener says, the distinguishing feature of Practice is that the choices to be made by the students are artificially limited. There is often no information gap, or a very small one. Practice covers a very wide range of activities from completely mechanical and almost mindless drills such as substitution or transformation, to much more open-ended activities like semi-scripted roleplays where the moves are dictated to the students, but the language is not.

USE (application/extension/ transfer)

The distinction between Practice and Use is not clear-cut. It partly depends on how the learner perceives an activity. A Use activity should be made to seem to the students as authentic or realistic as possible. If the students do not perceive their communication as in any sense 'real', they will treat it, psychologically, as Practice, and assign it to an 'address' in the brain which will be less easily accessible if they try to call it up later for real communication. In the absence of an authentic communicative task, this may require some imagination on the part of students, like children's play, but once that is achieved, fantasy becomes reality; practice such as a roleplay, simulation or problem-solving activity may evolve into virtual reality with imaginative students.

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Another essential feature of Use is that no one quite knows where it will lead, or who is going to say what. Creativity is required and there is no guarantee that anyone will use the language that may have been practised in preparation. This indicates another difference between truly authentic listening or reading, and Contextualization through either of these two skills. In Contextualization, the teacher uses the text with the specific intention of influencing the students' mindset, and the students are expected to play along with the teacher's 'game'. In truly authentic listening (Use), there is usually a bigger element of unpredictability. The most recently-practised language item does not occur in an authentic text just for the sake of exemplification – perhaps not at all. Learners are called upon to use all their resources, linguistic and otherwise, to understand the authentic text. Their attention is on function, not form, and they are free to adopt any attitude towards its contents, from total acceptance to total disagreement or disbelief.

The sequencing of the phases is flexible

These components can be sequenced in a variety of ways. There is no single pattern. PPP remains a possible variant, though in my model it would be called C-F-P-U.

The Contextualization phase usually serves as a pedagogical stimulus to any one of the other three phases; and it may involve non-verbal input, as mentioned above. On the other hand, it could also follow any stage. It might be a means of illustrating in context a language point that has just been analyzed or practised, without interrupting the receptive flow for pedagogical analysis or focussing, for instance in Suggestopedic concert listening (Lozanov, 1978). It could be an example of how native speakers perform a communicative task that students have just attempted (deep-ending 'test' followed by a 'show how' text), to be followed, perhaps after analysis (Focus), by the students' second attempt.

The Focussing stage can precede any of the other three phases (highlighting, or pre-teaching points to watch out for), but it could also follow any of them (for example to point out to students where remedial work is required).

Practice usually follows Contextualization or Focussing but it can also be a remedial step after a communicative 'deep-ending' task has been used to reveal areas of weakness for students to improve on.

To be optimally effective, is Practice normally best followed up immediately by Use? We often do this, attempting to transfer what is consciously learned in a controlled environment into more deeply imprinted repertoires available for uncontrolled expression. But transfer within the span of one lesson seems at least as likely to fail to materialize as it is to succeed. If the transfer does not take place, or if the practice itself proves difficult, the students may need to Focus (again?) on the problem area, or even be given a dose of schema activation, followed by further practice, before attempting to apply what they have practised. The Use stage can appear before or after any other stage, although it is often employed to round-off or culminate a lesson, or a learning cycle which extends over a period longer than a lesson. It can be a 'deep-ending' analytical initial test to help the teacher decide what should be taught subsequently; or it can follow a Contextualization activity which has served to activate the appropriate schema(ta). Wherever it comes in the sequence, it is essentially a chance for students to use whatever resources they have.

Instead of replacing PPP, subsume it into a more flexible system

As a general rule of thumb in initial (pre- or in-service) training courses, simple is better – as long as it does not involve oversimplification that radically distorts reality. I feel that PPP is an oversimplification, if it is offered as the only model. We need a model which is based on teaching/learning aims for lesson stages that create a logical productive lesson structure, encouraging teachers to teach to learning objectives, but not imposing on them a single recipe. Trainees can find comfort in knowing that there is a very small number of basic kinds of aim that they have to think about (I maintain there are 4) even though there is an infinite number of possible activities we might use to try to realize these aims. At least one benefit of trainee teachers having a better understanding of the generic, goal-based nature of the activities they use in their classrooms is that they may be able to avoid creating confusion by switching too quickly from one phase-type to another.

We need to bear in mind that a learning cycle is not necessarily confined within the span of one lesson, but can extend across two or more lessons. One can, of course envisage shades of grey, where an activity lies somewhere between two of the above categories, or attempts to fulfilmore than one function at once. The example of Community Language Learning springs to mind, where individual learners are at times free to decide from moment to moment whether they want to engage in genuine communication, or to say something simply in order to practise it, or to focus on a point of accuracy by consulting the 'knower' (animator). But such refinements, if desired, can come at a later stage in a teacher's development when (s)he understands the basic concepts. Meanwhile, I would be interested to know if any reader can contribute further refinements to this system, or suggest a better one to replace it.

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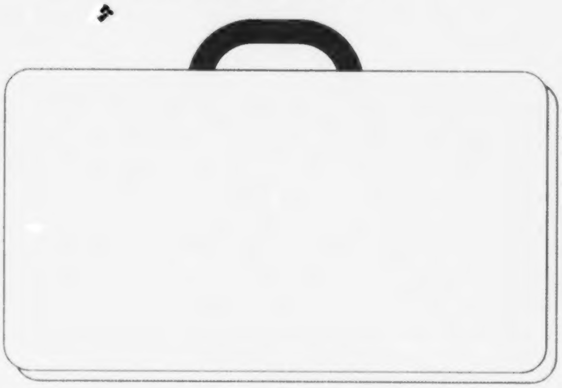
Thanks are due to my colleagues, Bill Stanford, David Bowker and Jan Visscher for their comments and suggestions, and to Tessa Woodward for her editorial wisdom and patience.

Suitcases, a training idea from Rod Bolitho

This activity first occurred to me when I was leading a residential seminar for trainers in Austria. I had arrived early for briefing, and was able to watch participants coming into the course centre which was situated in a beautiful mountain region. Although it was only a 2½ day seminar, their bags and cases seemed huge, and I found myself wondering what on earth they had in them. I was also reminded of the popular notion of 'psychological baggage', referring to the preoccupations and concerns which people take with them into new situations. I made a snap decision to drop the warmer I had planned and to replace it with the one described step by step below in the form of instructions to participants.

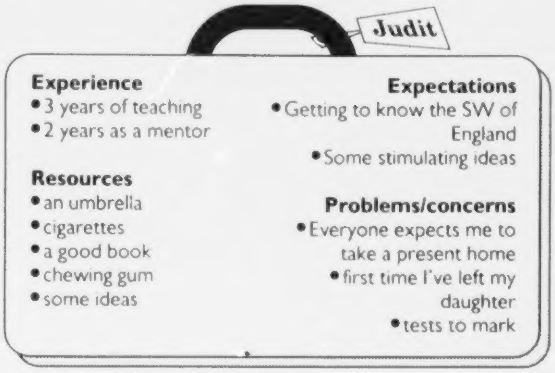
1. Take a sheet of A4 paper and draw a suitcase on it. It should almost fill the paper.
   I drew this on the board as an example.



2. In the top left corner, note down any expectations you have of the course.
3. In the top right corner, write down any problems or worries you have brought with you and which are still on your mind.
4. In the bottom left corner, note down any ideas or resources you have brought with you to share with others.
5. In the bottom right corner, show anything you have brought with you to occupy you in your free time during the seminar.
6. Now 'tie' a luggage label to the handle and write your name on it.
7. When you have finished, use Blu-tac to stick your suitcase to the wall.
8. Stroll around and look at the contents of all the suitcases. If you see anything that interests you, find the owner of the case and talk to her/him about it.

The result was a very animated session which broke the ice and helped participants to understand some of the priorities which their colleagues had brought with them. Since then, we have made frequent use of the activity both at the International Education Centre and on courses and seminars overseas. Steps 2-5 can be varied according to the nature and objectives of the course, and 'contents' of suitcases can be discussed in groups instead of, or before, displaying them on the wall.

Here is an authentic example of a suitcase offered on a one-week course for Hungarian school-based mentors in 1993 (the name on the label has been changed).



Judit

Experience
- 3 years of teaching
- 2 years as a mentor

Expectations
- Getting to know the SW of England
- Some stimulating ideas

Resources
- an umbrella
- cigarettes
- a good book
- chewing gum
- some ideas

Problems/concerns
- Everyone expects me to take a present home
- first time I've left my daughter
- tests to mark

We have found that the activity has the following benefits:

- it creates an easy and relaxed atmosphere (its metaphorical nature seems to help).
- it makes participants consider and respect the background and expectations of others (thus preparing them to make the compromises which are necessary on every course).
- it helps participants to identify shared problems and interests.
- it allows the trainer to assess the 'human resources' in the training room at the start of the course.
- it combines the personal with the professional, and the cognitive with the affective.
- it is 'democratic' in that it gives all participants (and trainers!) an equal voice.
- it enables participants to put their problems into the 'public domain'.
- participants only reveal what they choose.
- it is a good starting point for reflection.

The same metaphor is useful as a basis for evaluation at the end of the course. In the closing session, participants can be asked to re-examine the contents of their suitcases on arrival and then, on the back of the same sheet, to redraw it and to show what they are taking home after the course, (resources, ideas, solved and unsolved problems, etc).

One participant on the original Austrian course presented me with the following (again, the name has been changed)

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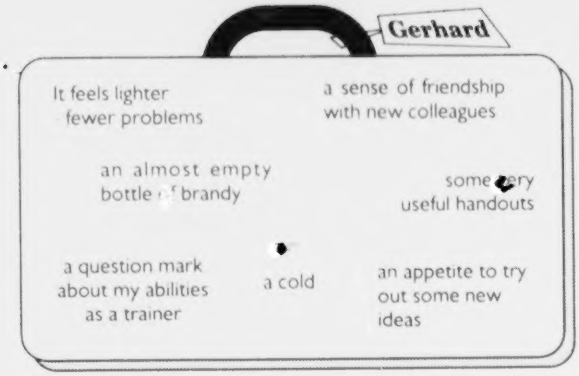
Gerhard
It feels lighter - fewer problems
a sense of friendship with new colleagues
an almost empty bottle of brandy
some very useful handouts
a question mark about my abilities as a trainer
a cold
an appetite to try out some new ideas

Taken together, a batch of such suitcases can give a strong flavour of the outcomes of a course.

By the way, I never did find out why the Austrian participants' bags were so huge!

Rod Bolitho International Education Centre
College of St Mark and St John

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On 'Control' in the Second Language Teaching Classroom

Zuo Biao

Introduction

In the domain of second language teaching, the word 'control' has somehow a negative implication and is often considered old-fashioned, teacher-centred or non-communicative. A second language teacher may feel a bit guilty if his or her lessons happen to be described as 'controlled'. Some teachers who have successfully conducted lively and effective classes with obvious overall manoeuvring will strongly disown the label of 'control'. Others who have loosened control over their classes to the point of total neglect of the students' participation will happily claim the title of 'communicative'. Many teachers are confused about the idea of 'control' and hesitant in action, some attacking 'control' only verbally while continuing to put it into practice.

Why has so much confusion around the concept of 'control' appeared? Is there any logical conflict or inherent mutual repulsion between 'control' and 'communication'? Do activities in the Second Language Teaching (SLT) classroom need to be controlled after all? These are the questions which I want to deal with in this article.

Miscomprehension of the Concept of 'Control'

Let's start our discussion with what O'Neill observed as a 'communicative' lesson (1991):

> "The teacher begins by giving each member of the class a sheet of paper, at the top of which there are directions for discussion. She does not speak while handing the sheets out to the group, and after doing so, she sits down silently and impassively at a slight distance behind the group. There is a period of complete silence while the students study the directions and look up words in their dictionaries...
>
> There is no indication of what to do. There are no follow-up questions. There is no discussion. There is only the same knitting and furrowing of eyebrows, the same repeated interrogation 'agree or disagree', the same one word affirmation or negation..."

Obviously, there is little control over the classroom activity in the lesson described above. O'Neill as one of the observers is sceptical about its effectiveness because of its 'student-neglect', while the Director of Studies, the other observer, assesses it as 'excellent and very student-centred and communicative' (ELT Journal 45/4 p.295). The two conflicting evaluations seem to focus on the same point - lack of control on the part of the teacher, and both relate it to its antithesis - freedom on the part of the students. The difference lies in one viewing it negatively as 'student-neglect' and the other, positively as 'student-centredness'. Let's make no hasty conclusion on the validity of the two evaluations before exploring some essential aspects of the concept of 'control' in general.

Control and Freedom

'Control' and 'freedom' are two related notions, but they are not necessarily opposites. 'Control' can mean the simultaneous gaining and losing of 'freedom', the gaining of freedom within a limit and the losing of freedom beyond that limit. The decisive factor which relates one to the other is the dimension of range, which makes both notions relative and not absolute. We may illustrate this point with Figure 1. In Fig. 1, numbers 1, 2 and 3 refers to the boundaries of 'control' while letters A, B and C represents the ranges of 'freedom'. Boundary 1 means the gaining of freedom range A and the absence of freedom ranges B and C. Boundary 2 means the widening of freedom range A with an addition of range B, but still excluding range C, and so on. We can take London Underground Ticket Zones for example. Greater London is divided into 6 zones. If you buy a one-day travel card for Zone 1 (Central London), you immediately obtain the complete freedom of taking whatever buses or trains available to whatever parts of Central London you like, but your freedom is limited to that area. You will be fined if you try to travel free beyond Zone 1 in a bus or train. The more zones your ticket covers, the more freedom you have, and the broader area of Greater London you can travel within. In a sense, you buy the 'control', exactly because you need the 'freedom' to travel with convenient means of transport. Therefore, control means the obtaining of the freedom of a predetermined behaviour, i.e. travelling free within the agreed zone, and the loss of freedom of any deviant behaviour, e.g. travelling free beyond that zone. When we employ such terms as 'quality control' and 'remote control' in industrial sectors, we are using them in a positive sense, as 'control' is exactly a guarantee of quality and normal operation of a process, and a prevention against poor quality and abnormal working of a process. Similarly, in the case of the SLT classroom, proper control means the students gaining the freedom to learn the language with initiative and in different ways and losing the freedom to do things other than language learning. Proper control does involve restriction, but it does so only when undesirable behaviours appear.

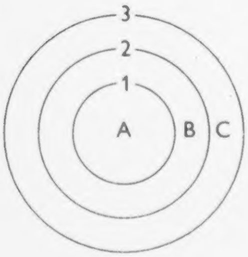

Fig. 1

1, 2, 3: Boundaries of Control

A, B, C: Ranges of Freedom

From the inter-dependence of 'control' and 'freedom', we can infer that the distinction or opposition between 'teacher-centredness' and 'learner-centredness' is inaccurate and misleading, because both labels can mean the two related sides of the same thing - the central role of the teacher in teaching and the central role of the student in learning. So-called teacher-centredness does not necessarily lead to the loss of the learner's centring on the use of the language in the classroom on their own initiative. On the contrary, it is precisely the teacher's directing control of the classroom activities that guarantees the full play of the students' potentials and initiatives. The teacher can be allowed , as Stevick (1980) suggests, "to keep nearly 100 percent of 'control' while at the same time the learner is exercising nearly 100 percent of the 'initiative'".

Control and Communication

Having clarified the relationship between 'control' and 'freedom', we can readily reconcile the apparent conflict between 'control' and 'communication'.

The communicative approach to second language teaching lays emphasis on providing more opportunities for the students to learn or acquire the target language by using the language in a linguistic environment which resembles to the greatest extent authentic communicative settings. This is by no means an easy job! It is easy for a teacher simply to reduce his or her own talk in order to provide more opportunities of practice for the students. However, how can we ensure that the opportunities provided by us are willingly accepted and fully used by our students, whose motivations, attitudes and emotions are not easily predicted and whose existing proficiency in the language varies considerably from one to another? To provide relevant and appealing opportunities, to ensure the voluntary and fruitful utilisation of the opportunities, to create an authentic environment - all these meaningful and yet demanding tasks related to communicative teaching, require, all the more, overall control and on-the-spot regulation by the teacher who must perceive classroom events, diagnose their meaning accurately and react appropriately.

Apparently, the teacher of the observed lesson (O'Neill, ibid) wants to apply the communicative approach to the operation of her class. She deliberately conducts her class silently with an intention of giving more time and opportunities to the students to discuss among themselves and more challenges for the students to meet by using resources from within themselves. There seems to be no question about her idea. Nevertheless, she stops at that and makes no further attempt to materialise her idea. She sits back impassively without bothering to find out the students' response and difficulties. She does not even spend the minimum time to make the directions understood by all the students. As a result, the opportunity provided by the teacher is barely used by the students; the time saved by the teacher's silence is wasted in the students' knitting and furrowing of eyebrows; the most authentic situation that can be found in the

continued →

classroom, i.e. the face-to—face teacher-student talk, is given up. Therefore, none of the important tasks characteristic of the communicative approach has been realised in the supposed 'communicative lesson', simply because of the lack, or rather, the conscious abandonment of 'control' on the part of the teacher.

I feel that a properly controlled lesson can be very communicative, and communication can fail in an uncontrolled or badly-controlled lesson. 'Control' and 'communication' are certainly not mutually repulsive.

The Necessity and Importance of Classroom Teaching Control

From the above discussion we can see the necessity and importance of classroom teaching control. In fact teaching is a controlled activity. It is controlled in such a way as to avoid randomness, irrationality and prejudice, and become professional, rational and humane. It is so controlled that the teacher even sacrifices his or her own personality if circumstances require. The teacher may exercise utmost patience when a slow student makes little or no progress, or may suppress a fit of anger when a trouble-making student causes mischief. He or she must learn to be empathetic, entering into others' thoughts and feelings, exiting debates and discussions so that his or her own ideas don't influence the outcome of the students. Without these conscious efforts of self-control on the part of the teacher, an ideal classroom atmosphere for learning can hardly be created.

Teaching is, moreover, a controlling activity. The teacher exercises control over the classroom environment with the clear and consistent aim of promoting the student's learning. Smith (1969) associated effective teaching with "the CONTROL of technical skills of teaching that facilitate pupils' learning". Many other educationists, linguists and teachers have also attached great importance to controlling classroom activities:

"The teacher as manager is a MANIPULATOR of elements in the classroom. "

Hudgins, B.B. (1971)

"The teacher MANOEUVRES, in a sense, to elicit from the student those behaviours that will lead to the achievement of the educational objectives the teacher has selected."

Joyce, B.R. et al (1969)

"Adequate MANAGEMENT of the classroom environment also forms a necessary condition for cognitive learning; and if the teacher cannot solve problems in this sphere, we can give the rest of teaching away."

Dunkin, M.J. (1974)

Words like 'manage', 'manipulate' and 'manoeuvre' used in the above-mentioned statements all help to convey the same idea: SLT classroom control is indispensible.

I myself have been teaching for 30 years in institutions of various levels ranging from primary school to graduate school with students ageing from twelve to fifty-four. No matter how old or at what level my students might be, what have afforded me the greatest pleasure have always been those lessons in which I found the whole class participating with noticeable interest and sustained animation mainly because of my careful planning and operative management. Of course I have also suffered from the painful experience of helplessly confronting the students' apathy, confusion and irrelevant noise only due to my lack of preparation and loss of control.

Control is necessary because each lesson is an organised unit of a course, and lack of control may cause a broken link in the curricular chain.

Control is necessary because the successful execution of any classroom activity requires attention to many interwoven factors: form, order, duration, variety, students' interest, etc. Any neglect of control may result in a careless, disorganised and even chaotic environment in which effective learning can not possibly take place.

Control is necessary because the teacher has to interact with a group of students who are both quick and slow, active and passive, friendly and hostile, shy and aggressive, serious and mischievous, interested and bored, accepting and doubtful. Any improper treatment may lead to the unfavourable reaction of the students and the breakdown of the teaching-learning sequence.

A teacher may change his or her roles in the classroom from time to time, being instructor, trainer, consultant, helper, interlocutor, participant, and even onlooker, but he or she must always bear in mind that his or her essential role as controller, whether played in an overt or a covert way, remains unchanged.

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Who Trains the Trainers? School-based mentorship and the future of teacher training by J.R.A. Williams

Beyond crude ideological considerations and the vagaries of academic fashion, the move towards more school-based forms of initial training is, like many innovations in the field, a result of a creditable desire for the integration of theory and practice. The advantages for all the parties involved in training are evident, and explain the increasing shift towards more school-based teacher training courses throughout the world. There is also a more fundamental change which has the potential to alter the profile of trainers as well as the nature of training.

Trainees perceive time spent in school as more relevant than any other training activity. Recently, I polled my second-year trainees as to what learning situations they felt most useful on our methodology course. In order, their preferred choices were: observing in classrooms, practice teaching, and talking to teachers. Similar responses were given by trainees involved in Articled Teacher and school/college partnership programmes in the UK (Williams, 1994).

Teacher trainers, constantly trying to close the perceived gap between theory and practice on initial training courses, have concluded that initial training is part of a continuing process of professional development and that as such it should be closely integrated with professional practice. In the light of this the move towards school-based training seems to be inevitable. Training and teaching merge within the 'school experience' component of courses, where trainees' transition from student to teacher is allowed for in the gradual accumulation of responsibilities in the classroom.

Equally recognised are the professional benefits to be gained by teachers involved with school-based training. Ted Wragg observes that "if student teachers did not exist, it would be worth inventing them as a means of fomenting critical analysis of professional practice" (Wragg 1994:85). Moon (1994) has documented the contribution of mentorship schemes to in-service teacher development in Bhutan.

Within all school-based training, the classroom teacher remains responsible for her class while allowing trainees to participate in classroom activities. It is to the classroom teacher that a trainee will naturally look for immediate support and advice, and ideally this will extend to counselling, observing and evaluating the whole process. However, in order to manage school experience and to help integrate it with the other elements of training in a world where many teachers are inexperienced, under-qualified and not themselves trained in methods and approaches being promoted on training courses, the mentor system has added a new role to the traditional practice triad of trainer, trainee and classroom teacher.

A mentor talks to the trainer and the classroom teacher and defines the expectations of each towards the trainee. The mentor acts as a guide, a sounding board, advisor, listener, moderator, who can excite, inspire and enthuse the trainee during school experience. The mentor also provides a reliable line of communication between trainers, classroom teachers and trainees where constraints of time and place often make meaningful contact impossible. Potential mentors are initially self-selected or chosen by schools, and mentor development programmes run on in-service lines by training institutions can identify those teachers most suited to the demands of the role.

Mentors can be paid for their extra duties on an hourly or pro rata basis depending on the amount of school experience and the number of trainees they are supervising. For the experienced and senior teacher, mentoring offers a professional challenge which does not necessitate moving out of the classroom. For school administrators, involvement in initial training is a saleable service facilitating the promotion and career advancement of staff within the school.

There is also a hidden benefit, the implications of which become clear when considering the teacher shortage which is becoming critical throughout the developing world. It is apparent that those teachers who are most capable of fulfilling the role of mentor are potentially the best able to become the trainers of the future. College lecturers hold academic qualifications, but few have been practising school teachers. As this generation of trainers retire, a ready source of replacements has been identified in the field. Mentors will be experienced as teachers and in working with trainees, will have a clear idea of the place of theory in practice and vice-versa, will have demonstrated the invaluable qualities of good mentorship, and will be best placed to gain the respect of all involved in the training of new teachers. School-based training means not only a shift from college to school for the trainee, but also a shift from school to college for the new generation of trainer.

This could represent the future of teacher training in a world where the demand for qualified teachers far outstrips the supply of useful training in established college courses. Initial teacher training will be in the hands of increasing numbers of those best equipped to design and deliver realistic and relevant courses of study. The move towards school-based training is just the start; the mentors of today are the trainers of tomorrow in training.

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Indian Problems and Indian Solutions

1. Indian Problems in ELT and LTE:

In this brief article I would like to discuss a few problems that are pan-Indian and also common in both Indian schools and teacher training institutions. The solutions I am suggesting are either those I have observed in some Indian classes or ones I have practised in some classes as a teacher of English.

The following are some of the major problems in the field of English Language teaching (ELT) and Language Teacher Education (LTE):

1. Unimaginably large classes for a teacher to handle; some classes are 120 strong.
2. Lack of technical and technological equipment such as OHP, TV, VCR and tape recorder.
3. Shortage of competent teachers of English.
4. Lack of suitable teaching materials, reference materials and other teaching aids.
5. Non-availability of copies of syllabus to teachers.
6. Indiscriminate use of bazaar guides (guides available in the market for passing English tests easily) by students and teachers.
7. Lack of adequate facilities for periodical in-service training for teachers.
8. Lack of recognition for and incentive for better teachers.
9. Lack of research facilities or support for teachers who are willing to do some action research.
10. Lack of motivation in students and teachers.
11. Lack of right aptitude and attitude in teachers.
12. Lack of professional guidance for teachers through professional bodies/agencies.

The list is not exhaustive but enumerates the major problems in the field. These can be grouped as logistic problems (1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9), teacher-related problems (3, 10, 11, 12) and learner-related problems (6, 10).

While some problems can be solved through better education policies of the government, most of them can be solved through careful planning at the training stage and faithful implementation at the teaching stage. In other words, most of these problems can be solved by teachers adapting and adopting the ideas they gain through their pre-service training and the books on ELT they read. What is important is the will to adopt or adapt the ides and techniques used in classes of other successful teachers elsewhere in the country or world and the LTE should train teachers for this adaptation.

2. Indian Solutions – a few observations and suggestions:

Large class problem: Indian classes have become large since the country's independence in 1947. Schools run by governmental agencies cannot restrict admission because the government's policy is to educate as many people as possible. Private sector schools do not restrict admission because more students bring more income. As a result, an Indian class on average has 50 students.

Large class solution: An Indian solution, therefore, to this problem, cannot be restricting admission or reducing the teacher student ratio. Group work, suggested as solutions by experts cannot be practised without adaptations. Spacious classrooms, movable furniture and cyclostyling facilities, which are necessary for group work are not available in most of the schools. So an Indian teacher who wants to practise group work has to think of alternatives. He/she can take the students outside the classroom and make groups to avoid the space problem and can make carbon copies with the help of students if cyclostyling facilities are not available. One who throws up hands and gives up hope at the sight of large classes can never be a good teacher in an Indian setting.

Equipment problem: Teaching is, no doubt, aided by gadgets such as OHP, TV, VCR and tape recorder, but not many schools can afford to have them. A few private schools do have them but their number is negligible.

Equipment solution: Teachers can always think of alternatives to these sophisticated pieces of equipment. Instead of OHP transparencies they can prepare charts and tables on paper boards beforehand and use them in the classes. The LTE institutions in India used to train teachers in the making and using of bamboo pens (pens made of bamboo sticks with broad and slanted edges for preparing charts) and this can be a part of all in-service programmes for teachers. I have seen a teacher educator using transparent, polythene carrier bags as transparencies in one of her classes – another Indian solution!

Syllabus Problem: A syllabus is an unfailing guide to a teacher, but most often teachers have no access to copies of the syllabus and therefore miss the essential guidance of a balanced programme.

Syllabus Solution: One of the solutions can be to print the syllabus in the text book itself. In most Indian states text books are printed and sold at a reasonable price by government agencies and so printing the syllabus in the text books may not be a problem.

Professional Guidance Problem: Discussing issues and sharing experiences in peer groups is an essential aspect of growth of teachers. But teachers in India, especially in schools, do not seem to feel the need for such guidance, which is unfortunate. And those who feel the need get very little help.

Professional Guidance Solution: Guidance can be made available to them through professional bodies such as Teachers Associations and Forums which can organise periodical meetings. Such bodies are in existence in India, for example, the English Language Teachers' Association of India, the All India English Teachers' Association, the English Teachers Forum etc. but most of these need government support in the form of funds for their programmes. The government could provide support to these agencies to organise programmes and run journals for the benefit of their members.

Teacher Aptitude and Attitude Problem: It is well known that teachers with the right aptitude and attitude alone can motivate students. It is unfortunate that in India most of the teachers have become teachers because they could not find other lucrative jobs, and so their motivation is very low. Such teachers without the right attitude can be a problem to students.

Teacher Aptitude and Attitude Solution: One solution to this problem is to select candidates for teacher training through a national level test which includes aptitude and attitude tests. Another solution can be to include a 'teacher apprenticeship' component to the LTE curriculum which is compulsory to all trainees for a period of six months. Certification could be based on their performance in this component.

Incentive Problem: It is essential that a professional keeps up to date in their knowledge and training and it is equally essential that a professional with up to date knowledge and training should be recognised and rewarded with incentives, otherwise teachers are not willing to better themselves and resist any further training.

Incentive Solution: Monetary incentives and promotional benefits can be tied to in-service training and innovative teaching. Private sector institutions can sponsor action research for teachers and encouragement can be in the form of incentives.

Bazaar Guide Problem: Bazaar guides are a real menace in schools. As they provide ready-to-use answers to all questions, students prefer them to the teachers_ notes. Some teachers also use them, surreptitiously though. Most of them are badly written and with a lot of spelling errors.

Bazaar Guide Solution: Instead of condemning the guides, teachers can read them and select the best ones for their students. Those with a lot of spelling errors can be used for proof reading exercises, and the few good ones can be used for developing study skills (with careful planning).

Conclusion

LTE – Need for re-thinking. Most of the solutions above are ones that some teachers practise in classes. These success stories should form part of the LTE so that teachers, when they enter the job, are fully prepared for it and don't get frustrated at the sight of large classes for instance. An Indian teacher of English must be able to face problems by adapting what is available. For example the Indian teacher should be resourceful enough to use a white dhothi, for an OHP screen and teach successfully with it rather than throwing up his hands in despair and giving up hope.

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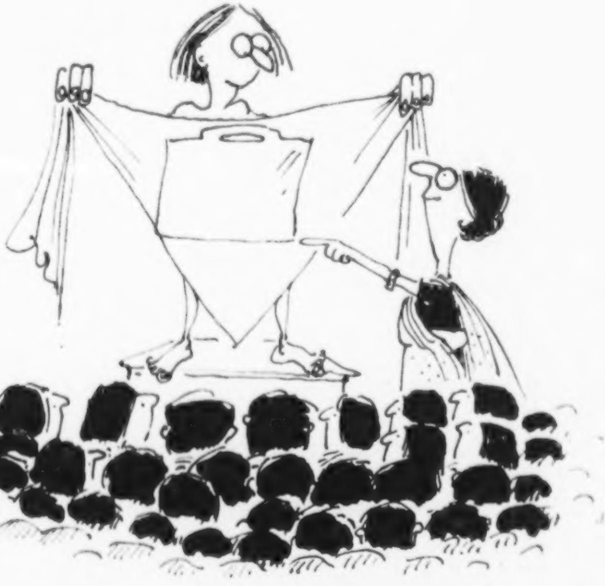

MEET A COLLEAGUE

Margit Szesztay is a teacher trainer at the Centre for English Teacher Training, ELTE , in Budapest, Hungary. In her work there, Margit has to attend lots of meetings. She has 25 colleagues and, to ensure coherence within the 3 year pre-service B.Ed. language teacher training programme there, it's essential to talk through, on a regular basis, common concerns, curriculum changes and other matters. So Margit often moves from teaching in a training classroom to having meetings in the staffroom in her day-to-day work. As a trainer she is in group leader role. As a staff member in meetings she is sometimes in group leader role, if she chairs the meeting, and sometimes in group member role, if she is a participant. This moving from role to role has caused her to observe herself, her colleagues and her students and to see parallels in terms of passivity, constructiveness and destructiveness from group to group. After Margit's session at the Edinburgh symposium for teacher trainers (See Volume Ten, Number One) I had the chance to interview her about what she has learned from role-swapping in different groups.

Q. What design features help meetings to be effective?

MS. Well, things like having an agenda that everyone at the meeting perceives to be relevant and worth discussing. Or finding the optimal group size for the specific task in question. For example, working out specific proposals for changing an exam is probably best done in a small group of 3-4 people, whereas evaluating these proposals might take place at an all-staff meeting. The meeting of twenty or so minds is an incredibly powerful resource. But like all resources it needs to be handled thoughtfully.

Q. Why do meetings go wrong?

MS. I think meetings of colleagues can go wrong for the same reason as meetings of students and a teacher can go wrong. The success of both kinds of meetings can be measured by the involvement of everyone present. Design features are important, but they cannot ensure that the group of people in question will invest their energies in achieving their common goals. In the end it's up to the people. To take the language classroom analogy futher, Roger Hunt, at this conference, talked about classrooms which on the surface may appear to be communicative and student-centered, but in reality are not. Students can be sitting around in groups going through the motions, talking, filling in gaps, completing tasks, without really communicating anything worthwhile, or without really being challenged in anyway. I think the same is possible when colleagues meet. All the surface-level design features can be there(negotiated agenda, strict time limits, firm chairing etc.) and yet people may leave the meeting feeling it was a waste of time.

Q. So how can people make sure that meetings go well?

MS. I've got no simple recipe for success, but I always know when a meeting has been a success. There is a sense of progress. People feel they have moved on. In the case of a staff meeting this might mean a decision that the majority of people feel good about. At a good meeting people are tuned in. They all need to tune in to the same wave length. If they are all tuned into different channels, there will be a lot of background noise, a lot of fragmentation. Tuning in can take a bit of effort. It's particularly hard to do when you are tired or feeling low on energy. But once people are communicating, listening well and responding, always making their contributions with the group's agenda in mind, well... I find it really exciting to be part of a group like that!

Q. Whose responsibility is it to make things go well?

MS. The chair can do a lot to make sure that people keep to the agenda, and that the aims set out by the group are acheived. But the chair is not the only one who is responsible for the success of the meeting. I think it's everybody's responsibility to contribute in a helpful way, to make comments, and only comments which take the group closer to achieving its common goals. This kind of helpful participation is what can make a meeting really successful.

Q. How do you learn the skills needed for this kind of participation?

MS. Yes, I think it does take special skills to be an effective group member. This has somehow by-passed people's attention! The skills and attitudes of a good teacher or teacher trainer, a good chair or facilitator of groups have received quite a bit of attention. I think we need a complementary set of questions about successful group membership. Discussing these questions will raise our awareness of the role group members play in successful group interaction. Before we can learn the skills needed for helpful group participation we have to identify what these skills are.

Q. How do you personally go about developing these skills in yourself, your colleagues and your student teachers?

MS. As I said before, identifying the skills is the first step. In staff development role what I have tried to do is to direct colleagues' attention to this area of effective group membership. To get them to think about the way they behave in group meetings, the way they contribute and help along the achievement of group goals. In my work with student teachers I also consider awareness- raising to be the starting point. I'll give you an example. I ask my students to give me written feedback regularly on how the course is going for them. I ask them to arrange their thoughts under the following headings: Me/ The group/ My tutor/ Tasks and activities/ Readings and home assignments. It has been my experience that getting students to evaluate their own contributions side by side with evaluating the teacher and the group helps them to realise that their individual contributions matter.

And finally, how do I go about developing helpful participation skills in myself? Well, before I make a contribution at a staff meeting I always ask myself: is this going to help the group along? Ideas might pop into my mind which are exciting but I try to refrain from making them public unless I feel they are really helpful at the moment. Well, no, of course sometimes I get carried away by my own ideas, and I'm not always a good listener! But I make more of an effort now!

Q. You call this encouragement to colleagues to develop their group participation skills, "training from the inside"?

MS. Yes, I feel that reflecting on our own group member experiences helps us to understand not just our students' behaviour but also has a staff development function making us better staff members whether we are at any particular moment group leaders or group members.

Q. Observing and trying out in this way could also make boring meetings more personally profitable too?

MS. Well, now you mention it ...!

Language Matters

In the language column this time John Ayto discusses "sleaze" and thus reminds us of some of the ways new words can be formed.

"Sleaze is this season's instant cliché. It actually surfaced in the 1960s, and until recently it was mainly used to convey sexual sordidness (Soho has been a common collocate). But this autumn's sleaze-burst has transferred it to corruption and venality in public life. It's a back-formation – that's to say it was coined by removing an affix from an already existing word. The process is an old one: the verb 'to beg' was created by back-formation from 'beggar' way back in the thirteenth century.

The majority of back-formations are verbs: 'to automate', 'to electrocute', 'to emote', 'to intuit', 'to negate' all began life as nouns ending in '-ion'. They're now more or less established as standard English words, but back-formation is good for the one-off joke too: 'Ken Dodd told the court: I desperately wanted to be a comedian, but I didn't know to comede' (Daily Telegraph, 7 July 1989). And our linguistic creativity extends to other word classes: I recently heard the adjective humile back-formed from humility.

The coining of sleaze from sleazy probably had a lot to do with its onomatopoeic quality: 'Sleaze has the right sound, an unpleasant mixture of slime and grease. It describes something that has spread like oozing oil in a thick veneer of slimy self-interest and greasy self-satisfaction' (The Observer, 23 October 1994). The pattern (noun from adjective ending in -y) is rare, because most -y adjectives were themselves formed by adding the -y to a noun, but here's another: 'Tack is everywhere. Go into the tunnel under the Thames from the Isle of Dogs to Greenwich. It could be spectacular, but it stinks like a toilet'. (Sunday Times, 3 July 1988)". (Reproduced from the Cambridge Language Reference News, by kind permission of Cambridge University Press).

INTERNET NEWS!

Talk to Teachers all over the world!

If you have access to The Internet, why not use the Pilgrims web site to talk to teachers all over the world? The Teachers' Meeting Place allows you to leave messages and exchange ideas with other teachers. Visit the Pilgrims house page, follow the link 'Courses for Teachers' and then follow the link 'The Teachers' Meeting Place'.

http://www.demon.co.uk/pilgrims-lang/

The use of metaphor in post lesson feedback

by Simon Marshall

During intensive, pre-service teacher training courses trainees find themselves with many new tasks and challenges to face all at once. Maybe one of the most daunting is the heuristic approach to lesson appraisal where the trainer asks, "What do you think of the lesson you just taught?". When trainees start to answer the question, I often find they become tongue-tied, struggling with the TEFL ideolect. "The controlled...or semi-controlled, well the bit when they tried to repeat it.... I ...um...". It's almost like self-reflection in the target language. The speaker knows what they want to say but fumbles over the vocabulary necessary to say it.

On a recent UCLES/RSA CTEFLA course, (week two of teaching practice or TP), I asked a group to write about their lessons as if they were walks. The "as if" approach is familiar to NLP practitioners but is of course centuries old. Trainees wrote for 15 minutes and then read their writing out loud to the group. I listened with my eyes closed. I had a refreshingly clear view of their thoughts on their lessons and so, it seems, did they. During TP trainees are often so nervous they don't know, from a technical point of view, what they are doing while they are doing it. Yet everybody can describe a walk. My aim in TP feedback is to let the teacher look at her process from more of a distance. THis "away from" stance provides a calmer, broader perspective on classroom behaviour. Here are a few extracts from the "lesson as a walk" writings, together with a couple of trainee comments on how it felt to do things this way.

"Walk

An uncertain beginning with the route not clearly in my head. One path I knew I had to take but the road to it was rather ambiguous. Lots of possible routes branching off it. Which one to take? I kept forgetting to look at the map but eventually hit the raod I wanted to take. Once on it, it was a bit of a disappointment! Boring and slow amd seemed to drag. The last few yards I had a burst of energy though and speeded up the pace. Finished the walk with uplifted spirits.

Comments....The idea of using the metaphor of a country walk was very effective. All the pitfalls of my process took on tangible qualities in this metaphorical journey. I was surpised how quickly the images flowed. When I'd finished, I realised what an incredibly accurate picture I had drawn of my lesson."

"My walk

There were black clouds everywhere. I couldn't see past them. Sometimes there would be a glimmer of light but it would soon disappear with what seemed like an extra cloud. Along the path it was very dark with trees that seemed to be pressing in on me. As I walked, the clouds thinned a bit and the trees edged a little way back from the path. There would also be moments when it got quite windy and this made it feel as if my head was spinning. When I reached the end of my walk I felt as if I was still walking.

Comment....I found metaphor used to describe my feelings whilst teaching interesting and actually quite therapeutic. Somehow it seemed to distance me from the stress and nervousness that I feel about this new experience and that can only be beneficial!".

"My lesson; a walk along a country path.

I started off my walk knowing where I was going and roughly the way I wanted to go. I'd looked at the path on the map and had noted some landmarks to guide me. But I didn't know the path itself, having never walked it before and I was a bit nervous. Would I lose the path and forget the way? Would I get to my destination?

It was pretty easy going at first. The sun was shining and it looked as if it might be okay after all. I began to relax and enjoy myself. The sun rose higher and higher and soon it got so hot that I was sweating with effort, particularly as the path had begun to slope upwards. Up and up I went, getting stickier and stickier and not enjoying myself anymore.

Suddenly the path leveled out and entered a glade of trees. I was glad for the coolness of their shade and rested a moment. I heard the birds and animals all around me and suddenly felt happy again. As the path emerged from the glade, I saw my destination in the distance and realised I would have to hurry if I was to reach it before nightfall. I rushed along and tripped a few times in my haste but I still just made it in time with the assistance of my travelling companions! Only when I got there, I realised that I had forgotten to eat my picnic! But all in all it was a good day in the country."

Variation

After trying out Simon's idea above, Mario Rinvolucri offered this variation.

With an in-service group of teachers, ask them to go inside mentally for about ten minutes to take a car journey, the journey to represent the way travelled so far with their present class. At the end of minute three, gently ask them to notice, as they travel along, a turning, and to remember its features. A minute later ask them to go back and see what it would have been like to take that turning.

If any readers have experimented with using metaphor when working with pre- or in-service teachers or trainers, we would be glad to hear from you. Just send the editor a line.

Trainee voices

...one way of hearing them.

As regular readers will know, the reason the trainee voices column was started in The Teacher Trainer was to make sure that the views of both sides of the training relationship were aired. It is rare to see articles by patients in medical journals or by lay members of the public in legal journals. In this journal for language teacher trainers we want things to be different. So we offer space and encouragement to trainees to say what they think about their courses and the path of their own development.

If you are a trainer you may wonder how possible it is for the pre- and in- service teachers you work with to feel free enough to give honest, clear opinions about the training they are undergoing, given that they are in an assessed, observed, "guest" role to your assessor, observer, "host" role, (and may need a reference someday!).

Over the last couple of years I have experimented with one way of giving trainees the chance to air their views and myself the chance to hear them. Here is how it works:

You need: To have friends who are trainers working with pre- or in-service teachers.

Step one. Tell your friends you are interested in learning more about trainee perceptions of the training process and ask them if you can start writing "interactive dialogue journals" with people in their group. It is essential that you do not observe, teach or assess their group yourself.

Step two. If your friends say "Yes", write a letter to each group member and seal each letter in a separate envelope.

Step three. Go and meet your friend's group of trainees with your friend's permission and when your friend is NOT there. Tell the group about your interest and about the letter you have with you. Explain that the letter will invite them to start an interactive dialogue journal with you. It will also explain the ground rules. i.e.

Confidentiality. You won't show the journal to anyone or divulge its contents to anyone especially not their normal trainer. You hope they won't divulge the contents to anyone either. Each journal will remain private between the individual and you and will travel back and forth between you in a sealed envelope.

Topics. The journal can be about anything but you can suggest that trainees write to you about their feelings on group learning, what they do when material on the course is already known to them or other subjects you'd like to learn about. Guide the topic away if necessary from discussion of the personality of their normal trainer.

Regularity. Taking into consideration the amount of time you all have, negotiate the number of journal entries you will attempt per week.

Correction. Explain that there won't be any, since this is a genuine exchange not a piece of homework that is right or wrong.

Step four. Either ask for a show of hands after your quick chat or return another time to find out how many people are interested and thus how many journal notebooks you will need to buy.

Step five. Give out the letters you have just been talking about.

Step six. Once you know who wants to start a journal, write their name and your own e.g. "Isabella/Tessa" on the front cover of a notebook and give each person concerned a notebook. Arrange a system for receiving and sending the journals back and forth between you in confidence.

Step seven. Once some journals have started coming to you, you need to a) reply to them in an honest spirit of exchange rather than assessment and criticism

and b) keep absolutely private anything that is written to you even if the normal trainer badgers you (ever so gently and humorously or otherwise) for information!

General points.

The journal belongs to the trainee so, if at any stage they want to stop, they should get to keep the journal. In any group I usually find it's about 25% who really like the interactive dialogue journals and respond with alacrity to the chance of a new channel of communication with a trainer. Others may write occasionally or start off and then drop out after a few entries. From the 25% who are regular writers though you will, in my experience, learn a lot about what training means to the trainee.

Sources

The idea above is a variation on ideas in:

Peyton J & L Reed *Dialogue journal writing with non-native speakers*. TESOL Pubs.

Haill A *Writing as a learning process in teather education and development* in The Teacher Trainer 4/1

Thanks to the trainers who trusted me enough to let me write to members of their classes.

Tessa Woodward

'Were you Wanting to Play?' – A Reply to Peter Grundy's Case for Pragmatics

Tony Penston, Bluefeather School of Languages, Dublin

In *The Teacher Trainer* Vol. 9 No. 2 Peter Grundy put forward a case for replacing the grammar (morphology and syntax) input in the language awareness (LA) component of the CTEFLA course with a pragmatics input. His argument was amusing and interesting but not convincing. In this article I shall attempt to reveal some flaws in Grundy's argument and add a brief remark on language description, evaluate the role of pragmatics in TEFL, and then present my preference for the LA component – a semantico-grammar.

But first, may I attempt a brief list of definitions for the reader: **grammar** = syntax (word order) and morphology (word formation, in this case grammatical); **semantics** = the meaning of words and sentences *perse*; **pragmatics** = the interpretation of utterances in context1.

Flaws in Grundy's argument

1. In his preface, Grundy relates stating that *-ing* forms (gerunds) and infinitives allow English speakers to convey [1] high committal or [2] little committal. His example sentences are reproduced below:

[1] I admire your writing books.

[2] I want to write a book.

What Grundy has unwittingly done here is to show how necessary it is (a) to be familiar with the forms termed '*-ing* form' and 'infinitive' and (b) to know their semantic qualities. And this hopefully is included in the LA component of all TEFL courses. How else would we know what he was talking about?

Downing & Locke[1] provide a near-minimal-pair example to show how the infinitive is biased towards potentiality and the *-ing* form towards actualisation:

I don't like to telephone him after midnight. (= I don't think I should)

I don't like telephoning people I don't know. (= I don't enjoy it)

Information such as this is useful for the EFL teacher to know. She may never teach it, but it will sharpen her semantic skills and her awareness of the importance of context, and thereby contribute to her self-confidence.

2. Grundy then goes on to say that we shouldn't include the morphology in 'loved – kissed – hated' (/-d, -t, -Id/) in the LA component, because, according to him, trainees will treat their grammar input as input for students, and students left to their own devices would acquire this knowledge as we did. This contains (a) an implied criticism of tutors, that they do not warn their trainees against using training input as teaching input, and check their TP accordingly, (b) an implication that an ignorance of this morphology would be harmless to an EFL teacher, and (c) a sweeping statement to the effect that L2 is learned in the same way as L1.

To answer these, (a'): in my experience the warning 'Don't bore your students with your prowess' is delivered seriously and often to trainees. I will concede that despite this some will slip through the net and 'teach grammar' occasionally, but we have to balance this risk with the other scenario, which concerns (b'): language learners, at least a certain section of them, will always ask questions about grammar, and if the answer 'I don't know' becomes frequent they lose confidence in and respect for their teacher. I think we have all been asked by a student 'Why start-Id but not ask-Id?' or words to that effect, and the student was grateful for the clarification. And I'm sure we didn't embark on a lecture on suffix morphology – 'grammar only in the required quantity' is the motto. This again is related to (c'): if a student will ask such a question **it shows** that L2 is not learned, at least not entirely, in the same was as L1. Most applied linguists are agreed on this so I won't go into that debate.

Language description

Grundy does ask one valid question: at what level of description are we to approach grammar? In other words, how much do we teach, considering the fact that some aspects of English are very difficult to impose rules on. This is an old chestnut with which experienced teachers and students have never had trouble. The answer is, simply, that we teach what the student requests and would benefit from knowing – tenses, word order, relative clauses, etc. Obscure syntax is at such a high level that it plays a minimal part in TEFL. In any case, the question can be bounced back: at what level of description are we to approach pragmatics?

The role of pragmatics in TEFL

First of all, there is a fact belied by my simple definition above, and ignored by Grundy: *pragmatics is not at present a coherent field of study*[3]. Crystal[3] deals with it in three major sections (the first section is untitled – what follows is suggested from the text): 1. Distinctions of Formality, Politeness and Intimacy; 2. Speech Acts; 3. Felicity Conditions.

Now, levels of formality and politeness have been part of communicative language teaching ever since the functional-notional syllabus came on the scene. If Grundy wishes to propose systematizing them I would be interested in seeing the results. He could also include Intimacy while he's at it. Apart from that, I would contend that the other principles of pragmatics, speech acts, felicity conditions, presupposition, implicature, etc. are universal. I know there are socio-cultural differences, but the speaker of 'Must visit your mother soon' in any language, will get a thump from the listener if he/she says it while regarding a mature orang- utan in a zoo.

For another example, one of Grice's maxims[4]:

(i) Make your contribution as informative as is required for the current purposes of the exchange.

If A asks 'Have you got a light?' and B answers 'Yes,' but doesn't produce a lighter, this is flouting the maxim above, albeit partly in terms of expected action (perlocution). This is identical in many languages, e.g. Spanish 'Tienes fuego?' 'Si.' What is predictable here in the classroom is not a preoccupation with maxims or perlocutionary acts but a concern to teach/learn the correct pattern for the function and context. I was once pleasantly nonplussed when asked 'Have you fire?' by a comely Dutch girl.

Semantico-grammar

Semantico-grammar is the usual grammar component of TEFL training courses, but with the semantic skills brought to a high degree. Semantic contexts are predictable; pragmatic contexts are not, e.g. we know the range of uses of the present continuous and can suggest suitable contexts, but the implicature in 'must visit your mother soon' cannot be economically forecast. Semantico-grammar enables the teacher to **fit the semantic with the grammatical,** visualizing appropriate contexts, e.g. she should understand the various nuances conveyed when always is included in a verb phrase in continuous aspect, e.g. *He's always mowing his lawn* (context: lazy neighbour complaining about lawn-mower noise); *He was always helping the handicapped* (context: obituary for philanthropist). Another example: being able to perceive and explain the (conditional) difference between *What would you do if you won the lottery? and What will you do if you win the raffle?*

Lest it be forgotten, part of the teacher's skill is knowing **when not to teach grammar**. The teacher's role is primarily to facilitate the acquisition of English through communication. She should *exploit* grammar only as an aid in this process. So, for instance, at beginner level the students need not know that there is more than one time reference for the present continuous tense. Also at lower levels there would be no need to introduce the rare uses of certain verbs in the continuous aspect, e.g. *Some were wanting to play but I wasn't*[5].

Conclusion

Pragmatics is an important aspect of language, but it cannot be allotted any appreciable chunk of the LA component of CTEFLA courses, because (a) this is already stretched to provide what the trainees and students have shown they want, and (b) many aspects of pragmatics are universal.

It is important that the role of semantico-grammar be clarified and reaffirmed, even expanded, to prevent the complaint *Native speaking teachers simply don't know the language system*[6] becoming widespread.

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3. Crystal, D. (1987) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. C.U.P. pp120-121.
4. Grice, H.P. (1975) 'Logic and Conversation' in Cole, P., & J.L. Morgan (eds) *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*. Academic Press pp 41-58, and in Davis S (ed) *Pragmatics: a Reader* OUP pp305-15.
5. Spoken by Peter Cook (1976) on *The Parkinson Show*. Repeated BBC 26/7/95.
6. Nunan, D. (1994) Interview in *The Teacher Trainer* Vol 8 No.3 p10.

! NEWS !

"Languages Through Culture –
Culture Through Languages:

Intercultural Learning and Awareness
Teaching/Training in English and other European
Languages", 5th International NELLE-Conference
(jointly with A.P.I.A.),

19-22 September 1996, Zaragoza/Spain;
Registration Forms from: NELLE-Conference
Office,

c/o Beethovenstr.5, D-33604 Bielefeld/Germany,
fax +49(0)521/66 209. Speakers include:
Catherine Walter, Gillian Porter Ladousse,
Misa Bojarová, Arthur van Essen and Michael
Byram.

A human rights approach to teacher training

In volume 8 number 3 of The Teacher Trainer, Dr Francisco Gomes de Matos wrote a short article about language learners' rights. In this article he focuses on teacher trainers' rights.

Introduction

Although there has been hard work aimed at securing universal visibility of our professional activity, there is as yet no written history of TESOL teacher training and still an enormous catalogue of things to be done before teacher trainers can be called "humanizers", that is, people imbued with a human rights approach to teacher education. In this respect teacher training is in an adolescent stage of development. The following checklist, in which no hierarchical sequencing is intended, is offered as a first attempt to construct a human rights centered methodology. It was sparked off by some insights in Woodward (CUP 1991).It is as open-ended as our own field and colleagues are urged to expand and deepen the list.

A checklist for teacher trainers.

As a teacher trainer do you have the right to:

*know as much as possible about each trainee prior to the training and the trainee the right to know as much as possible about you?

- share the activity of selecting trainees?
- use your own training style, harmonising it with the preferred style of your institution and of the trainee group?
- be trained in action research(see refs)
- be observed by another trainer?
- share in the selection and application of evaluative measures such as entry and exit tests?
- co-plan training courses with fellow trainers rather than follow a set pre-scripted course?
- receive systematic feedback from trainees on your training performance?
- take part in workshops, seminars, conferences and other professional development opportunities?
- do your job in a comfortable, pleasant setting?
- form a professional group with colleagues at city or country level?
- be formed, informed and transformed positively by trainers,trainees and students since we are all co-learners

Human rights and communicative peace constitute the deep foundation on which all attempts to help trainees is built. When constructing an overview of training parameters (see Woodward op cit P164), perhaps human rights could occupy a space of its own next to the belief dimension?

As trainers of language teachers we are priveledged to act as change agents in a domain which ultimately involves hundreds and thousands of human beings in educational settings. Let us thus do the job in a humanizing way.

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The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing(1995) Eds.T.L. Harris & R.H.Hodges. Newark, Delaware international reading association.(see P4 for definition of action research).

Reactions can be sent to Prof F. de Matos, Associacao Brasil-America, Rua Maria Carolina 581, Boa Viagem, 51020-220 Recife, Brazil Fax: 55-81-3268670

Journal Exchanges

"The Teacher Trainer" has arranged journal exchanges with

IATEFL Newsletter (UK)
English Language Teaching Journal (UK)
Modern English Teacher (UK)
English Teachers' Journal (Israel)
RELC Journal (Singapore)
Teacher Education Quarterly (USA)
Forum (USA)
Focus on English (India)
TESOL Matters (USA)
University of Hawaii Working Papers in ESL

and is abstracted by 'Language Teaching', The British Education Index, the ERIC clearing house and Contents Pages in Education.

'The Look': Some Observations on Observation

by Tom Farrell. English Department. Yonsei University Seoul, Korea.

Introduction

She had already arrived and was sitting at the back of the room writing something on a large piece of paper. Oh no! I didn't know she was coming today. Oh my! I should not have gone to that party last night. What is her name anyway? I wonder should I go down and explain why I had just arrived at nine o'clock and not my usual fifteen minutes before. Oh no! She has stopped writing and is looking up. I guess she expects me to begin.

I hope that little Brian is quiet today. Now let me get my notes. Oh Lord! she is staring at me. Ok! Ok! Cool down.I better review yesterday's lesson. Where the hell are my notes. She is still 'Looking' at me. Oh boy! no Brian, don't ask a question. No!

"Yes, Brian?"

"Oh! Mr. Farrell, why are we doing this lesson today, we already finished this last week?"

"Quite right, Brian; thank you for telling me, anyway today we are going to review..."

Examples of the 'The Look'

And so went my first experience with 'The Look' from my observer. This was, of course, my teaching evaluation from my university days. I still remember that first day the observer was sitting in my classroom eighteen years ago.

She sat there in the back of the room with a, "I am the expert,let's see what you can do" Look. I now wonder how I managed to continue teaching for the past eighteen years considering I have never completely recovered from that initial experience. I only realized that I was not alone when I read of similar experiences from highly accomplished TEFL professionals.

I am not however, writing this to get even; rather I am writing to inform colleagues of the possibility of great harm with classroom observations. These sessions can turn-off a teacher for life if they are judgmental concerning the abilities of the teacher's teaching skills. As Chaudron (1988, p. 179) has pointed out, we do not in any case know what constitutes effective language instruction in all situations.

'The Look' that I am talking about lasted all year in my teaching course and each time I was on the receiving end of it, my anxiety levels in the classroom increased to very high levels. Not one timdid this observer sit down and talk to me about my teaching after her observation. Instead, she said, "Thank you" and left the room.

This was not the last time I was to get that same "Look". Oh, no! When I traveled to Korea in 1979 to teach at a prestigious institute at a top-rated university, I got 'The Look' again; in fact when I was interviewed for the job. Yes, that very same "What can you do"? look. After one week teaching, I heard a knock on the door. I opened it and in walked the director without any warning. She had 'The Look'.

"I want to 'Look' at you teaching", she said.

"Fine", I said. But it was not really fine.

I coped, somehow. But 'The Look; was to raise its ugly head again several years later in another university in Korea. You know how it goes by now: "Thomas, I would like to see what you are doing in your class"; said with 'The Look' of, "Let's see what you can do."

Implications

So what does all this mean? I can never forget 'The Look' but I can educate colleagues about the possible abuses of observing another in class. Now I really do not care who (or with what 'Look' they have) comes to my class. But I have written down a few questions that the observer MUST answer:

(1) Why do you want to come to my class? If the answer is to watch me teach, then my answer is no because I am not a model teacher and you are probably going to judge me against some preconceived notion of what constitutes good teaching.

(2) What are you going to do in the class? If the answer is just sit at the back, then my answer again is no because I want an observer to help me to observe some aspect of my teaching that I am interested in. So the observer has to be ACTIVE.

(3) What are you going to use the observation process for? If the answer is research, then I say no. I want to know the exact research project and how I fit into the scheme of things ie. how MY class can help in this research? I am not against research and in fact am constantly conducting my own. Rather, I think bad research (not set up with clearly defined objectives) can do more harm than good to the teacher being observed and his/her students who may not like outsiders in the classroom.

Conclusion

I have found that these three questions have helped me to avert 'The Look' because when the answers to the questions are to my liking, the observation process can be a wonderful experience. It can be an enlightening exploration of what it is to be a teacher working withother teachers (peer observation), and it can be a learning experience (for focused research). Also, it can be used to evaluate. But evaluators should be able to explain their criteria for evaluation. It would be interesting to see their look at that time!

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“Double TP”: The value of Teacher Trainees repeating their practice lessons

by **David M. Bell (Nagoya Shoka Daigaku, Japan)**

Introduction

Like many centers which offer pre-service teacher-training schemes which include an on-site practicum, Georgetown University has struggled to recruit students for teaching practice classes. Recently, however, we were able to solve our student recruitment problem in a manner which has had profound effects on the way teaching practice is structured. Because we now have an abundant supply of students, we have been able to split classes at the same level and to introduce a system of what we have called "double TP," which requires trainees to repeat their teaching practice lessons. What follows is a first assessment of the effectiveness of the double TP system.

The Double TP system

Originally, students for practice classes were recruited from the immigrant labor force employed on campus, a highly motivated but limited supply. They were supplemented by students on intensive English programs, but their attendance was sporadic and their level usually higher than the needs of the teaching practice. However, when we contacted the Carlos Rosario School, an adult education center which teaches mainly ESL to the immigrant and foreign population of Washington, the response was overwhelming.

At first, we decided to screen students from the center, taking only the most motivated. But this was time-consuming, so we decided on a policy of open enrollment. We figured that, even though class size would be large initially, students would drop out and we would still have more than enough students. As it turned out, on the first day of teaching practice, attendance was so good that we were able to split the classes so that we had two classes at each level - beginners and intermediates. This meant that trainees, who under the previous system taught one day and then observed their peers the next, were required to teach everyday. Because there were two classes at each level, they got to teach the same lesson twice. This is the system that we have called double TP.

Trainees teach in groups of three, each trainee at the beginning of the course teaching 40 minutes everyday. One group teaches the first lesson without trainer observation/feedback and then repeats the lesson observed. The other group teaches the first lesson with teacher observation/feedback and then repeats unobserved. The trainer rotates groups so that trainees get the chance to both teach the first lesson unobserved and then repeat observed and to teach the first lesson observed and then repeat unobserved. On one course, where the trainee intake was sufficient to allow for three levels - beginner, intermediate and advanced - the doubling of classes at each level simulated a small language school with trainers functioning like directors.

Problems anticipated

Our biggest fear in introducing double TP was that trainees would be overtired. However, the response from the trainees was enthusiastic. On one course, where we did not have enough students to double the classes at the beginner level, the trainee group which began with that level and, therefore, only taught every other day felt that their development had been slowed and were eager to get on to the next level where they would be able to do double TP. If tiredness was a factor, and it clearly is on short intensive courses, our trainees indicated that they would prefer greater flexibility in the scheduling of writing assignments rather than any reduction in the amount of TP. The general feeling was the more practice, the better.

Another fear that also proved unwarranted was that trainees would find it harder to establish a rapport with their classes. Under the double TP system, teachers might meet with a class as few as three times. But none of our trainees felt that this impaired the rapport they were able to build up with each class, and indeed they appreciated the greater variety of students that they were exposed to. What's more, trainees very quickly realized that classes took on personalities of their own, and that just because the first lesson went well, it didn't necessarily mean the second would too.

Drawbacks

One drawback of the system is that trainees don't get to observe their peers as much as they would like. Teaching in groups of three, they can observe only the other trainees in their group. Allowing trainees to visit other groups would weaken the peer evaluation process, which becomes more important in this system because only one of the two lessons is observed by the trainer. Reshuffling trainee groups poses scheduling problems. However, when it came down to a choice between more peer observation and teaching practice, trainees unanimously opted for double TP.

The real problem with this system, as already indicated, is that it places far greater importanceon peer evaluation. (Trainees rated peer feedback only slightly less important than trainer feedback.) For the most part, we asked trainees in their unobserved first lesson to list three things they did well, three things they didn't do so well and what changes they would make for the repeated lesson, and to use this self-evaluation task as a way of structuring peer feedback. At the conclusion of the peer discussion, trainees were then asked to hand in their written self-evaluations to the trainer. These evaluations were then used as a basis for trainer feedback in the repeated observed lesson. With regard to the group who were doing their repeated lesson unobserved, we were rather at a loss as to how to structure the peer discussion meaningfully and tended to leave the trainees to their own devices.

Yet, ultimately, the quality of peer evaluation is dependent on just how good trainees are at giving feedback. Typical comments about peer evaluation were the following: "I wish my peers were more into this process. I tried to do my best. Perhaps a more thorough peer-review sheet would improve things." "I didn't feel like I got a lot of peer feedback except when Tom was in my trainee group." "Peers seemed reticent to say anything that might seem negative." Given that peer evaluation is an essential component of the double TP system, far greater thought needs to be given to how trainees can be encouraged to give more meaningful feedback to each other.

Advantages

The great strength of the system, however, appears to be the way that it demands that trainees become 'reflective practitioners' (Schon 1987). Comments in the course evaluation bore this out: "Teaching twice allows one to test hypotheses about why a lesson did/didn't work." "Teaching a lesson twice allows you to learn how and why a particular lesson works well." "It allowed you to learn from your mistakes quickly and easily." "Even if the first time was not being observed, you learned from your mistakes and Voila! got to implement what you learned the next day on the second try." In the usual one-off system of teaching practice, teacher reflection is often concerned more with particular skills in abstraction from a particular lesson, so the motivation to reflect is not nearly as imperative as in a system where the lesson has to be repeated. As one trainee put it, "We were TIRED, and if a class bombed and didn't need to be repeated the tendency may have been to NOT analyze the reasons why and look for solutions."

Having to repeat the lesson gave trainees a clearer idea of the kind of feedback, whether from peer or trainer, they needed and made them far more receptive to it. "I always learned something by doing it twice," one trainee commented, "especially when I was observed the first time and got input. I think it's key to get input from either faculty or teaching partner." And at the same time, the need to repeat the lesson also helped focus the trainer's feedback on the practicalities of how the lesson could be improved. After observing the first lesson, trainers could then offer suggestions about activities, staging and classroom management, etc., knowing that these suggestions were directly relevant to the trainee's repeated lesson. And where the second lesson was observed, trainees' written self-evaluations from the first lesson served as a basis for trainers to illuminate the process of reflection. By stimulating the reflective process, double TP helped reduce the gap between how trainees saw their own performance and how trainers saw it (Kennedy 1993).

Assumptions

An underlying assumption of double TP, an assumption still untested, is that the repeated lesson should be better or at least felt to better than the first. When we asked trainees whether they found their lesson better the second time, the responses were surprisingly mixed. Whereas half our respondents felt the second lesson was usually better (and no one felt the first was usually better), the remaining half felt that it varied. "It totally depended on the lesson and the class," was a typical response. "It might go well with an outgoing class but poorly with a shy class and vice-versa." Another trainee, who clearly had some previous teaching experience, commented: "I'm not sure I can answer.... There was not enough time to build up any consistency to first or second time. Once it was better the first time, another time it was better the second time. I think this is realistic. You teach the same lesson more than once in the real world - it never turns out really the same way."

Another assumption we made was that, where the second lesson was considered better, this would be the result of trainer feedback in the first lesson. However, only a small number of the trainees felt that the second lesson was better because of trainer feedback on the first lesson. The majority of trainees felt that the second lesson was better because they had already had a chance to practice it, regardless of whether the feedback on the first was from trainers or from peers. This was borne out by the trainees' responses to the question: For which lesson did you make the most changes? Although slightly more trainees indicated that they made more changes for the second lesson when it was observed, most trainees responded that the changes were the same whether the second lesson was observed or not.

And finally, when we asked trainees if the double TP system should be kept, the response was unanimously affirmative. Typical of the responses were the following: "Double TP should be continued. All the positives far outweigh the negatives." "I think double TP is one of the main advantages of taking the course at Georgetown." "Doing a lesson twice definitely was an important path of the learning process."

Conclusion

If the response of our trainees is anything to go by, and it clearly is one measure of effectiveness, double TP does seem to work. We still have to work out strategies for improving peer feedback and for reconstituting groups to allow for greater peer observation. But, as long as student numbers continue, double TP will continue to be a vital part of the Georgetown program. And on a wider level, there seems no reason why the double TP system cannot be used in any teaching practice situation and at whatever level as one more tool in the promotion of reflective teaching.

References

Schon, D. A. (1987). Educating the reflective practitioner. San Francisco/London: Jossey-Bass.

Kennedy, Judith (1993). "Meeting the needs of teacher trainees on teaching practice." ELT Journal. Vol. 47:2.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The following may be of special interest or relevance to teacher trainers:-

- **Dialogue journal writing with non-native speakers:** a handbook for teachers by J. Peyton & L.Reed (1990) TESOL ISBN 0-939791-37-4. If you sill haven't tried writing interactive dialogue journals with your language students or teacher trainees then this slim, practical book will get you started. It gives sensible answers to questions like, what do I do about correction? What about the reluctant writer? When do we write? Most of the examples given involve school students but the principles remain the same with teachers in training.

- **E-mail for English teaching** by Mark Warschauer (1995) TESOL ISBN 0-939791-62-5. If you are still waiting to get hooked up, then this book will remain tantalisingly theoretical. If you already have an e-mail address, then it will give you ideas on how to collaborate with teachers, access archives, work within and between classrooms, use e-mail for cross culltural exchange and distance education. The final pages discuss general principles, further reading and contacts. Useful.

- **Diary of a language teacher** by Joachim Appel (1995) Heinemann ISBN 0-435-24076-5. Verbatim extracts from six years of diary -keeping by a state secondary school teacher are followed by analysis and exploration of the themes raised in the diary entries. The whole plots the development of a teacher from "survival" through "change" to "routine. Very readable, sympathetic and thoughtful.

- **The good language learner** by N. Naiman et al (1996) Multilingualmatters. ISBN 1-85359-313-3. Originally publlished 1978. This classic study reprinted, attempts to answer questions such as: What strategies do successful learners adopt? What attitudes to language do they show? What are their most successful learning experiences? Thus it balances the attention paid elsewhere to the language system, teaching methods and SLA theory. The new 3 page foreword is a useful summary and the rest of the book remains clear and interesting.

- **The guided construction of knowledge,** talk amongst teachers and learners by Neil Mercer (1995) Multilingual matters ISBN 1-85359-262-5. This book is about how people help other people to learn. It uses examples of talk recorded in classrooms to show how people succeed or fail in sharing knowledge and understanding and discusses guidance strategies from different cultures, the learner's angle, theory of practice and groups without teachers. A small, slender book full of good things.

- **Team building with teachers** by Judith Chivers (1995) Kogan Page 0-7494-1778-1. Short, simple book in big print that might help you if you are either running a session on team building and want to find the odd exercise such as SWOT or SMART or if you want to check you are in line with some management practices.

- **Inspiring innovations in language teaching** by Judith Hamilton (1996) Multilingualmatters ISBN 1-85359-283-8. The writer describes and examines innovations in the modern language classroom in Scotland, New Zealand, Bangalore and The Bronx in order to reach tentative conclusions about the organisational structures and training policies which appear to foster innovative approaches. There is an excellent summary of the book at the start. Part 4 holds useful arguments for teacher trainers to produce active, ideology-proof teachers. Non-academic, personal, well-detailed information throughout.

- **Teachers' interactive decision-making** by David Nunan (1993) ISBN 0-85837-846-9.The third in the NCELTR series of research reports funded by the commonwealth dept. of immigration and ethnic affairs. 9 ESL teachers were observed, recorded, interviewed and invited to analyse the decision-making processes they went through while teaching.

- **Judicious discipline** by Forrest Gathercoal (1993) Caddo Gap Press ISBN 1-880192-07-1. Describes a democratic management style used in public schools in the USA. Details the philosophical rationale, legal back-up, educational practices, problem resolution tactics and staff and student rights involved. An attempt to break away from the authoritarian reward and punishment system.

- **Practising judicious discipline** edited by Barbara McEwan Caddo Gap Press (1994) ISBN 1-880192-09-8. Designed to complement the book above. In part 1 nine contributers discuss judicious discipline. Part 2 gives lesson plans and ideas for the democratic, student-centered classroom.

- **Beginning teaching:** beginning learning in primary education ed Janet Moyles (1995) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-19435-4. 15 contributers from the University of Leicester work with pictures, texts and cameo examples to explore issues such as what it is to be a competent and effective teacher, how to plan, observe and assess classes, how children learn and support networks. Accessible style. Not written with TESOL in mind but much is applicable despite the competency-based approach.

- **Teacher appraisal:** a nationwide approach eds A.Evans & J. Tomlinson (1989) Jessica Kingsley Pubs ISBN 1-85302-509-7. Analysing the different and contradictory origins of the British government's demands for teacher appraisal in UK state schools, (accountability vs professional development) and including 10 contributions on this specific theme, the paperback will nevertheless inform any TESOL DOS faced with the reality of setting up assessment or development programmes in schools.

New Periodicals

The Bulgarian teacher trainer sponsored by the British Council, is a newsletter for teacher trainers and all those interested in teacher training and development in Bulgaria. From A. Wiseman, Project Manager, The British Council, 7 Tulovo St., Sofia 1504.

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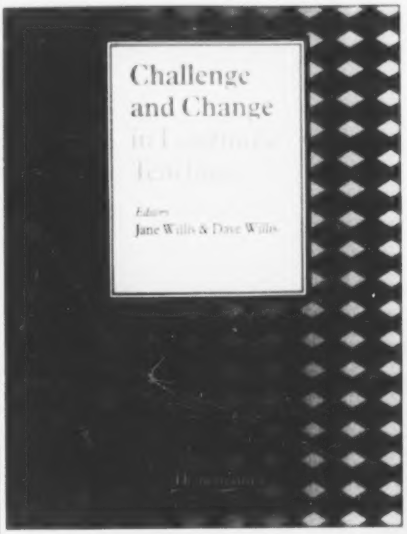
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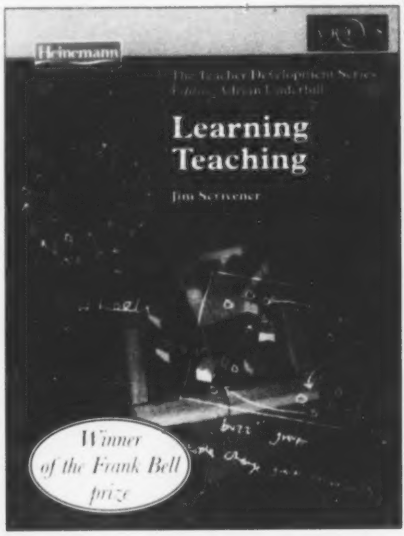
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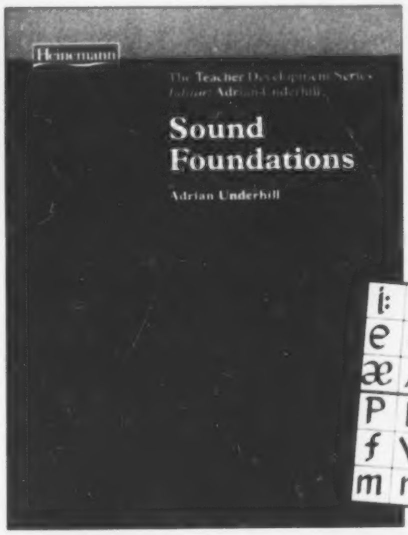
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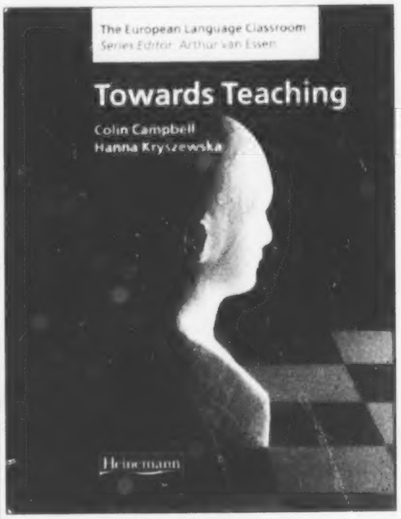
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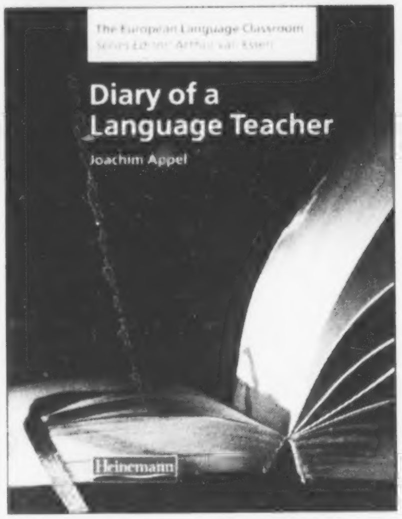
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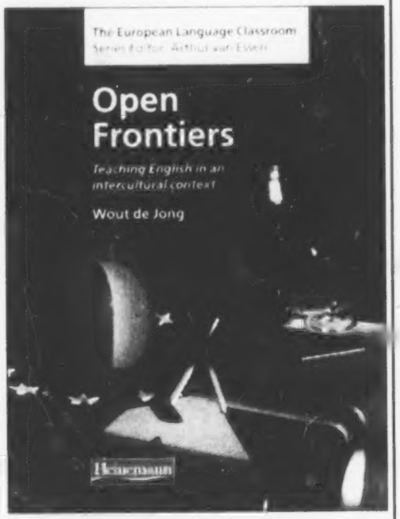
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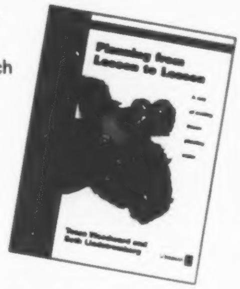

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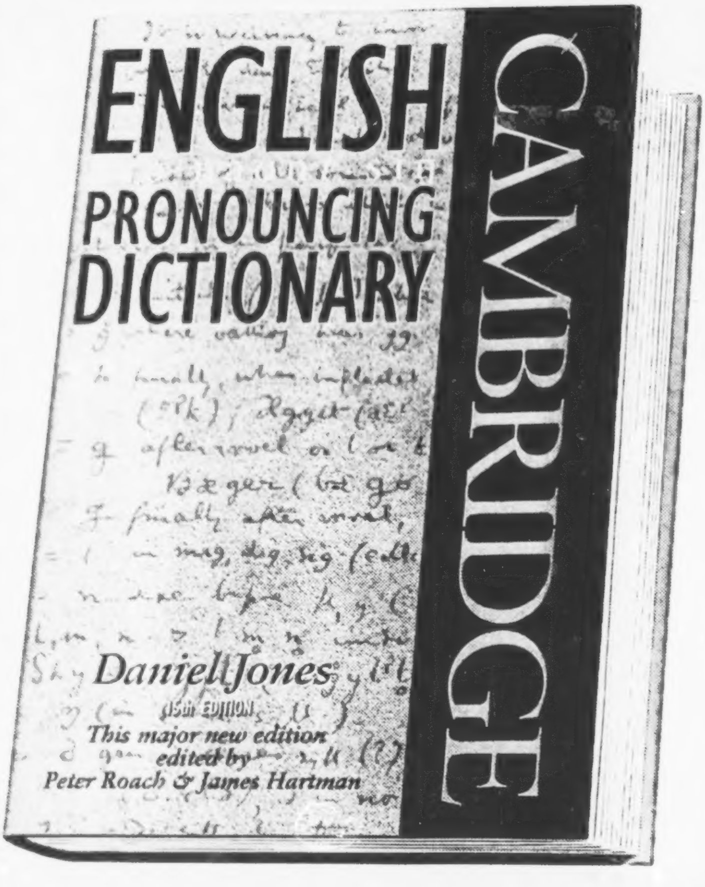
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The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. article, letter, comment, quotation, cartoon, interview, spoof, haiku ideas. If the idea is good, we'll print it whatever voice you choose to express it in.

Editorial

First a word about prices!...A number of concerns have nudged their way to the forefront of my brain recently. These are:

Postage costs have been rising steadily over the last ten years. It's difficult for subscribers to decide if they should have an individual or an organisational subscription. And finally, it takes some administrative time to handle two different types of subscription. For these reasons we've decided to unify the subscription rates for 1997. The new, unified rate of £23 still includes postage! We feel that this is a fair price for a unique journal that specialises in one closely-targeted professional area.

If, however, you feel that you can't afford the new price, we have a scheme that will enable you to subscribe for an even lower price than you do at the moment. Here's the idea. As a current subscriber, if you can find us a new subscriber, you can have your own subscription for half price. You just send us your friend's name and address and their subscripion payment (£23). Your friend must be a new subscriber. At the same time send us your own name and address and subscription payment (£11.50). We will then dispatch a year's supply to your friend and to you at your separate addresses.

Next, let's take a look at this, the last issue in Volume Ten. We consolidate one of our newest columns – language matters, with a discussion of whether we have to change our language, for the worse, in order to advance in our profession, (P11). Our concern to learn about the trainees' point of view is supported by Jill Cadorath's report on trainee preferences in feedback style, (P4).

For trainers who feel rather isolated, we introduce a new column called Questions and Answers, (P18). We hope it will act like a postal staffroom, a place where you can toss out odd queries and have them answered by colleagues or help out fellow readers when they have a question to ponder.

As usual we carry a couple of longer, more considered, "thought pieces". One is a sustained critique of "ARC", (P7). If you're not sure who or what ARC is, then you might want to refer back to previous issues since this article by Scott Thornbury continues the long-running debate in the journal over the shape of pre-service language teacher training. We can always send you back copies, by the way, so get in touch if you would like to buy some.

The second of our longer pieces is by Beatrice Davies who looks at the growing number of French nationals opting to train and teach in England. She reports on a case study designed to find out French attitudes to language, culture, the job and the training received in the UK, (P14).

If you want a practical idea to use on a course tomorrow, try Rod Bolitho's lively mapping of career pathways in order to unlock the wealth of experience in each course participant, (P13).

If you want to know what our colleagues in China are up to, try Wu Xin's report (P20) on the constraints at work there.

So, what are the main issues we've taken on board this year in Volume Ten?

- Getting more trainee voices heard in these pages

- Encouraging people to speak directly and freely whether on the difficulties of women teachers in male environments or on the problems of feeling even half-way competent when views of language, teaching and learning are shifting so fast

- Continuing a real blend of short and long, practical and thoughtful articles, big name authors and first time writers both from the UK and elsewhere.

In the next volume we will sustain and develop these angles. And add some new ones too. But don't forget, if there's something YOU want to say, advertise or suggest, just get in touch. I really look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, happy reading!

Tessa Woodward
Editor

Letter

Dear Mario Rinvolucri,

Thank you for taking the time to reply to my article. I am somewhat surprised that you were amazed and amused by its contents. It occurs to me that you may merely want to raise a bit of dust. If that's the case, I've got my own carpet to beat.

Without doubt, what I write and say as a teacher and teacher educator is founded upon a set of assumptions. What holds for me, I think also holds for you. So, ditto Mario. I think you invest me, or my statements, with more power than they, in reality, have. Assumptions aside, a writer's power may also lie in the profile he or she has. Measured in terms of published work, yours is quite high. Your books are popular and, as a teacher educator, I often recommend them. So let's see what some of your assumptions and mind sets are.

One is that on Sunday evenings, teachers should not concern themselves with the lesson content of the following day, let alone the week to come. At best, a teacher might have assembled some tests ("that don't look like tests") in order to diagnose the learners he or she will meet tomorrow. This is certainly a valid approach.

However, I have a memory of myself as a novice teacher fourteen years ago, having just graduated off a pre-service teacher training course. I was slightly nerdy and had some concern that my learners were getting a reasonable deal in the form of a varied and interesting language programme. My ability to analyse language back then was shaky. I wasn't capable of recognising language items in my students' discourse in order to diagnose a linguistic plan of action.

Let us also imagine that I had just done my pre-service course with you, Mario, and the message was "take each moment as it comes, observe your students and respond to their needs". (Is there a faint whiff of rat here? One by the name of 'mental structure'?). My conscientious nature would have probably followed you to the letter. I know, with hindsight, I would not have been up to the task in terms of language analysis and methodology. I can picture the uncomfortable interview with the Director of Studies as he or she tactfully informed me that my learners were feeling some degree of dissatisfaction with my teaching. I can also imagine spending the following weekend planning my heart out with guilt in my heart for you, Mario, but with an overriding desire to hold on to my job.

I find a lot of your letter argued from a position of privilege. I have no doubt that you are responsive to your learners and you are likely to be adept at adopting this approach to teaching ESOL. But how many years have you been teaching? And, yes, your medical metaphor is interesting. In New Zealand, doctors spend six years at university and a further two following an internship. I imagine something similar in the U.K., unless the National Health Service has been reduced to a point where doctors, along with ESOL teachers, spend four weeks training. I think a lot of recently-trained teachers would be able to respond to their learners as well as you after several years of education and training instead of one month or, at most, one year.

All this seems to point to another assumption that underpins your letter. That is, as learners, foreign students are in some way more worthy than trainee teachers. What about trainees' "flesh-and-blood, here-and-now"? Have you listened to trainees' concerns and fears in the same way you listen to your foreign students? Have you followed these through at in-service level and responded? My work on timetabling grew out of problems trainee and novice teachers had articulated.

I did indicate this at the beginning of the article. However, as you point out, I failed to indicate that I get teachers in training to plan for the students they are teaching in their practicum, and reiterate that timetables need to cater for the needs of individual groups of learners they will teach in the future. That struck me as being obvious. Yes, I suppose my work on timetabling does elaborate a mental structure, but then, why are mental structures always bad? Do they always run counter to learner needs?

There appears to be yet another assumption lurking behind your less-than-enthusiastic attitude towards mental structures that suggest prescription. I think it goes something like this: teachers are ultimately too inflexible, naive or dim-witted to escape the prescriptive tyranny of a mental structure and engage their learners. It's as if you have little faith in the ability of teachers to respond to learners naturally and spontaneously, while still adhering to some kind of prescriptive model as a point of reference as they venture out into the real world of teaching ESOL. We all have to start somewhere and try to get our bearings. A mental structure (even of the RSA/Cambridge variety) might be just the map we need initially. I make it clear to my trainees that whether they timetable or not when they are in a working situation is up to them. It's their choice, not mine. Timetabling is a tool they can put to use if they want to.

That doesn't stop me having secret hopes for them. I'll share one with you. You see, what I would really like, Mario, is that teachers plan their timetable on Friday evening rather than Sunday, as you suggest. Knowing that they have broken the back of their planning load, knowing that they have made some effort in trying to organise a varied and interesting language programme for their learners just might mean they can forget about school until Monday morning. No mean feat if you are inexperienced, a bit nerdy and concerned about your students. At least that way you might have a more relaxing weekend.

Craig Thaine
Auckland, New Zealand

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Micro-Teaching Feedback Styles - an investigation of trainee preferences

by Jill Cadorath

Introduction

Micro-teaching forms part of many teacher training programmes – either formally, with a certain period of time devoted to a block of micro-teaching, or, more informally, with a brief micro-teaching session following on from input on a specific aspect of language teaching e.g. correcting errors, or introducing a reading text. Whatever the approach may be, an important aspect of any micro-teaching session is the feedback – the way participants and trainers reflect and comment on what happened.

The aim of this article is not to investigate in detail the feedback process by examining different approaches to giving feedback, their advantages and disadvantages, their theoretical precepts etc. – but rather to describe a situation where different feedback styles were used, and to comment on the participants' preferences.

Micro-teaching Feedback

Any micro-teaching situation is potentially threatening to the participants. The most frequent reaction to being asked to teach to or in front of colleagues is nervousness – the feeling that one is laying oneself open to criticism, often negative. The immediate response to seeing a colleague teach is all too often 'that wasn't very good – I could have done better' rather than 'that was good – I can learn from that'. This is also what the micro-teacher tends to expect from the trainer – 'tell me what I was doing wrong so that I can do better.' If that is the case, we, the trainers, should not shirk our responsibility – telling a trainee where s/he can do better is part of our job. However, it is also vitally important that the teachers themselves become aware, firstly, of those areas where they are doing things right, secondly, those areas where there is room for improvement, and, finally, that there is no one right way of doing things.

There is a wealth of material on suggestions for feedback strategies in teaching practice and micro-teaching. Useful books and journals are Woodward (1992), Gower and Walters (1983), McCarthy (1991), and issues of The Teacher Trainer. Bearing in mind both what we had read and the purposes of our own brief micro-teaching programme, my colleague, Roy Taylor, and I decided to investigate trainee preferences for different feedback strategies during the brief micro-teaching component of an in-service training programme.

We planned to use a different feedback method for each 'micro-teach' and to finish by asking the participants which they had found most enjoyable and useful. Our reasons for doing this were various:

- Just as there is no one way to teach, there is no one way to conduct feedback. There are a variety of different methods, which may be more or less successful depending on the group, the time available, the aims of the micro-teaching programme etc.
- It must be recognized, however, that some methods seem to be more productive than others, and trainers should be aware of how the amount and type of comment may vary according to the different methods used.
- We hoped that trainees would notice changes in the roles adopted by trainers and trainees. We encourage teachers to give their learners the opportunity to take on more responsibility for what happens in the classroom and to adopt different roles so we as trainers should practice what we preach.
- The more we can find out what our trainees enjoy and find useful, the more chance we have that the activities will be productive.
- The 'we know what's coming next' feeling can be very demotivating to trainees. Trainers try to vary their input modes, their organization of groups, the planning of activities, etc., so varying feedback on micro-teaching, especially when carried out intensively over 2 or 3 days, seems a possible solution to the negative effects of familiarity.

The Micro-Teaching Context

The experiment described below was carried out with the participants on an in-service training programme, which began in January 1995. The 17 participants are all teachers in the language centers of 7 public universities in the South-East of Mexico. They are experienced but unqualified and are therefore taking a B.Ed in TESOL offered by Canterbury Christ Church College, a three year programme funded by the British Government's Overseas Development Administration, with 6 intensive blocks taught in-country by local and Canterbury staff. In the second three-week intensive course there was considerable input on teaching the 4 skills (as well as integrated skills) and lesson- and unit-planning. At the end of the workshop sessions, where participants worked on designing their own materials and/or exploiting their coursebooks, they were invited to try out their ideas, in a series of brief micro-teaching sessions with colleagues as 'students'. Participants were grouped into 4 teaching teams (4 or 5 people per group) with each group being allocated 30 minutes teaching time.

Feedback Styles

After each 30 minute 'micro-teach' we, the trainers, introduced a different feedback style, as follows:

MT 1 – Feedback Style 1: Teacher-led Discussion
The trainer led the discussion, asking for individual comments from the micro-teaching group and from the 'students', i.e. colleagues, leading on to a general discussion.

MT 2 – Feedback Style 2: 'Student'-group Conference
The 'students' were divided into 4 groups (3 or 4 in each group) and one member of the micro-teaching group joined each 'student'-group and discussed, firstly, the good points, and secondly, points and suggestions for improvements/alternatives.

MT 3 – Feedback Style 3: Critical Writing
All participants were given 5 minutes to write down 2 good points and 2 points that needed improvement. This was followed by the trainer asking individuals to read out their points for comments by the micro-teachers and by the rest of the group. See Fig. 1 for s ample comments.

Fig. 1

Good Points
It kept the attention of the class –
students were curious as to what was going to happen.
Visual on the floor acted as focus for the exercise.
Lots of participation.
Everyone involved right from the beginning.
Very original presentation – lots of suspense.

Points for improvement
More examples from the teacher.
Teacher should speak less at the beginning.
Too much TTT (teacher-talking-time)
Instructions not clear
Not enough modeling
It might be useful to write a sentence.
Needs more explanation at the beginning.

MT 4 – Feedback Style 4: Focused Blackboard Comment

During the micro-teach the 2 trainers noted down 5 key points relevant to the presentation. (The presentation was based on Reading Skills, leading on to Speaking in a group activity, followed by a debate. The 5 points, focussing on stages of the lesson as well as management techniques, were: Introduction to Topic, Exploitation of Text for Reading Activity, Instructions for Activities, Group Activities, Follow-up Debate.) These were then written on the blackboard as column headings and the participants were asked to go u p to the blackboard and write down comments under each heading. These comments were then used as a basis for discussion. See Fig 2 for sample headings and comments.

continued →

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Fig. 2

Exploitation of text for reading activity	Instructions for activities
Wasn't sure what you were doing!! Poor – however, very challenging A bit difficult Too difficult!! Relevant subject OK	Very clear They were not clear for me (Activity 1) The instructions were not very clear Left in the fog at the beginning Could be more explicit – why not check understanding? They were not clear

Follow-up Debate
Excellent Nicely conducted Lots of interaction between students It was fun but I thought about the balance of the skills used in lesson. Good I couldn't tell if your group was doing Reading or Speaking!

Trainee Preferences

At the end of the final Micro-teaching session, participants were asked to state their preference for feedback method 1, 2, 3 or 4. The results were as follows:

Method 1 1 vote	Method 2 5 votes
Method 3 1 vote	Method 4 10 votes

There were several interesting comments made about the different approaches:

- Several participants suggested a combination of Methods 2 and 3, i.e. working in groups, but first making a note of 2/3 good points and 2/3 points for improvement.
- Participants liked the intimacy of Method 2 and felt it was easier for the micro-teacher to accept criticism and argue his/her case. On the other hand, this method meant that there was less whole-group pooling of ideas, something which the other methods permitted .
- Participants found it useful to see how contradictory some of the comments were in Method 4. There were many differences of opinion and this was made more evident using this method.
- Method 4 resulted in more positive comments. Was this because it was written on the board for all to see and discuss and therefore participants were keen to show their colleagues that they could be positive?

Conclusion

Trainee teachers need to develop their own critical awareness of what works best in the classroom. This awareness is best achieved by involving them in the feedback process in a way which is dynamic and creative, and, most importantly of all, non-threatening. This small-scale classroom investigation has shown us not only that some of our teachers prefer this type of feedback rather than trainer-led sessions, but also that, by listening to trainees' views on the different processes involved in the training programme, we are encouraged to search for more creative ways of developing that much-desired critical awareness mentioned above.

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McCarthy, M. (1991) Training Foreign Language Teachers Cambridge: Cambridge
Woodward, T. (1992) Ways of Training Longman: London
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"ARC": DOES IT HAVE RESTRICTED USE?

Scott Thornbury

"ARC"

Jim Scrivener's "ARC" model (Scrivener and Redpath 1993, Scrivener 1994, Scrivener 1995, Scrivener 1996) is gaining popularity with teacher trainers – especially on pre-service courses – as an instrument for describing the way lessons are put together. It is often presented in contradistinction to the reigning "PPP" model of lesson design – a model that has for some time now been under attack because of the assumptions about both language and language learning that it embodies (see, for example, Willis 1990, Lewis 1993). Variations and adaptations of the basic ARC model (e.g. Lovelock 1996) are testimony both to the widespread frustration with the existing PPP paradigm, and to the feeling that a less prescriptive model, such as ARC, is an idea whose time has come.

There is a great deal to commend in Scrivener's ARC, not least its rejection of "presentation" terminology with its implied allegiance to a "transmission" model of teaching (Barnes 1976). His use of the term "authentic" (as in "authentic use") is particularly felicitous in that it expands the notion of authenticity to encompass not only certain kinds of texts, but certain kinds of tasks as well. This emphasis on the importance of authenticity within learning contexts – a phenomenon that, however you wish to define it, is often conspicuously lacking in observed classes – can only be welcome.

C and R

The application of the terms "clarification and focus" and "restricted use" are more problematic, however, in that Scrivener, wishing to distance himself from the prevailing "presentation" and "practice" terminology, has attempted to define these from the learner's point of view. Hence, "C" is "the part of a lesson where learners become clearer about a language item" (Scrivener 1994: 23). "I zoom in and look closely at some specific pieces of language" (Scrivener 1996: 101) is how the learner might articulate this process. But to define "C" in terms of high-inference learner processes ("becoming clearer", "zooming in") rather than, for example, low-inference teacher behaviours (e.g. explanation, correction), points to one of the difficulties of the model as an observation instrument. How can you really tell at what moments learners are "becoming clearer?" And when one learner is "zooming in" it may be that another is glazing over. ARC, it is claimed, offers "a simple, clear, flexible way of describing what teachers and learners do" (Scrivener 1996: 99). However, it appears that, unlike other descriptive devices – such as FIAC, FLINT and COLT (see Nunan 1989) – the ARC model is concerned less with describing observable behaviours and outcomes, and more with capturing barely perceptible (and often accidental) mental processes. As Lovelock points out: "Clarification...is a result that we hope for, rather than routinely engineer" (Lovelock 1996: p4)

"Restricted use" activities are defined as those where "the language available for the learners to use or understand is in some way restricted" (Scrivener and Redpath 1993: 70). Since learner output is invariably restricted – by the limitations of their interlanguage, by processing constraints, for example – and since the input they receive is also very often restricted – simplified texts, "teacherese", input from peers – this definition is unhelpful. Scrivener is clearer when he gives examples: "restricted activities are those that offer opportunities for language practice, for improving accuracy, for testing, for display" (Scrivener 1996: 103). But this is to define "R" from a pedagogical standpoint, that is, according to the teacher's agenda and is simply another way of saying "P for practice". Moreover, by maintaining the mutually exclusive accuracyfluency distinction, the model fails to accommodate the view that it may be possible (and, in fact, desirable), through adjustments in task conditions, to have "a fluency activity with a focus on accuracy" (Willis and Willis 1987: 15).

Grammar rules

In fact the closer you look at it, the more the elements of ARC (A, R and C) begin to look like the elements of PPP (P, P, and P) , the only difference being the way you order them. Perhaps this is because, essentially, ARC is designed to describe grammar-driven lessons: "It is of primary use in describing lessons and activities in which the aim is towards better understanding and use of grammar and other language systems" (Scrivener 1996: 104-5). And again: "the analysis is based on the range of things that happen in a single lesson, or part of a lesson, where the teacher or students are working *with language*" (*ibid:* 100, emphasis added). Yet, in the same article, Scrivener claims that "I can now look at any activity in any lesson and make a decision about what box it best fits" (*ibid:* 104; emphasis added), suggesting – perhaps inadvertently – that *all* lessons and activities are aimed at "grammar and other language systems". For a model that claims to be freeing teachers from the straitjackets of current orthodoxy it seems curiously committed to a view of language learning in which explicit attention to grammar plays a prominent role. Whether or not one agrees that it should, a descriptive model that has no application to lessons or methodologies where there is "zero grammar" is not a versatile model.

A blunt instrument

Apart from these limitations, there are other problems in applying ARC as an observation instrument. What exactly

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is an "element", for example? Scrivener talks about "building bricks" – but how big is a brick? When does one brick stop and the next brick start? Failure to specify the unit of analysis makes ARC very difficult to apply in practice. Moreover, many classroom routines are nested within larger routines – how, for example, would you describe a discreet (and discrete) correction signal from the teacher during an authentic use activity?[1] I question Scrivener's claim, therefore, that ARC provides "a very powerful observation instrument" (Scrivener 1995: 42).

But it's not my purpose to argue with ARC in terms of its descriptive power. It's its lack of *prescriptive* power that concerns me more.

On models and omelettes

Scrivener is at pains to point out that, whereas the PPP formula prescribes a model for classroom practice, ARC does not. "ARC is nothing more than a description" (Scrivener 1996: 111). It is not really a model at all – not in the dictionary sense of "[1] a system that is being used and that people might want to copy in order to achieve similar results" or "[2] a theoretical description that can help you understand how [a] system or process works, or how it might work...". [*Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary*]. ARC is purely a descriptive device – a set of labels.

Labels are of great use, not least because they give practitioners a common language with which to talk about their practice. But the act of labelling even if it were less problematic than I have suggested above – does not *ipso facto* result in improved practice. I might be able to label the parts of a DIY coffee table, but without some kind of picture or plan or blueprint I still may not be able to assemble these parts. I might be able to identify a couple of eggs, some butter and herbs. But I still am no wiser as to how to make an omelette. This is the crux of the issue: does the ARC device equip trainees to *design* good lessons, or does it equip them simply to describe such lessons, once designed?

Scrivener's claim [illegible]hat lessons are not like coffee tables or omelettes. No blueprints or recipes are required. On the contrary, ARC frees trainee teachers "to create lessons in the way that many experienced teachers do, by putting components, like building bricks, together in different orders" (Scrivener 1996:100).

My claim is that experienced teachers do not, in fact, sling lessons together in this seemingly arbitrary fashion; that, instead, they work from a set of mental models – *generative* models – just as a good cook has a mental representation of the "omelette process", for example, out of which a multitude of different omelettes might be created.

Moreover, these models are predicated on "good practice". It makes no sense to put the eggs in the pan before the butter. Just as it makes little sense to design a lesson which consists of nothing else but a repetitive sequence of grammar points and written exercises – as Scrivener himself admits, or rather, gets a trainee to admit: "He [we?] decided that maybe ... the repetitive sequence of activities and the limited interaction patterns had been somewhat predictable and unmotivating from the students' perspective" (Scrivener 1996: 109). There are good omelettes and there are bad omelettes; there are good lessons and there are bad lessons. Trainees need models of the good ones.

Scaffolds and images

Models are life-savers. Faced with the inherent multidimensionality and unpredictability of classroom interactions, teachers need to reduce their own mental load in order to free attentional resources for the cut-andthrust of classroom interaction. To do this they need to develop classroom routines and they need an internal representation of a lesson (or "scaffold") on which to map these routines.

The mental scaffolds that experienced teachers acquire, and which provide structure to their planning decisions, have been described at various levels of generality, as, for example, *schemata* (Leinhardt and Greeno 1986), *mental scripts* (Shavelson and Stern 1981), *plans in memory* (Calderhead 1984), and *images* (Morine-Dershimer 1979). However described, these mental representations have a powerful heuristic function.

Take images, for example. Experienced teachers have *images* of lessons: "These are images teachers have in mind of how lessons typically run. For instance, teachers can have an image of a mental arithmetic lesson, spelling lesson or practical science lesson which typifies the way in which the lesson would be conducted, the necessary preparation and organization, what the children would do and how they are likely to respond". (Calderhead 1988: 55) In our own field, this means that the expert language teacher has a mental image of a reading lesson, a grammar lesson, a writing lesson etc. It is this image that makes planning decisions easier, and which, during execution, provides a structure for the lesson within which the teacher can operate effectively.

Novice teachers lack these mental representations of lessons, and they feel the lack acutely. Kennedy (1993) has shown, for example, that trainee EFL teachers' primary concern when writing lesson plans is not with the content but with the format. The selection of aims and objectives was of less concern than questions of the structure and organisation of the lesson plan itself. What they required was an *image* – or model – of how a lesson should be structured.

Prescriptions

In answer, then, to Scrivener's own question "Should trainees be offered clear, prescriptive 'route maps' for lessons?" (Scrivener 1996: 97), Kennedy's answer (and mine) would probably be: "Well, yes." Kennedy, in fact, distinguishes between "pure" and "impure" supervision: by 'impure', she means "essentially a prescriptive type of supervision *but one in which the trainees are offered a series of alternative practices rather than one right answer*" (Kennedy 1993: 162; emphasis added).

To his credit, this is also Scrivener's approach in *Learning Teaching* (1994), in which he offers four lesson types (or images): Logical Line, Topic Umbrella, Jungle Path, and Rag-bag. These four models are described, and trainees are invited to experiment with them. This would seem to be a training route that is consistent not only with Kennedy's "impure supervision" for training, but also with the way expert teachers conceptualise their own practice: in terms of a repertoire of lesson *images* less elaborated than "route maps", perhaps, but not as arbitrary as a loose jumble of building blocks.

Of course, it is not necessarily the case that expert practice is the best model for training. Some will argue that there are no shortcuts to expertise. Others, like Berliner (1986), however, believe that "the performance of experts, though not necessarily perfect, provides a place to start from when we instruct novices. The experts' performance provides us ... with a temporary pedagogical theory, a temporary scaffolding from which novices may learn to be more expert". (Berliner 1986: 6)

This is the argument that is often advanced for the PPP model: that it provides a temporary scaffolding (see, for example, Gower 1995). Unfortunately, as Scrivener rightly points out, PPP is often the *only* scaffolding provided. More unfortunately still, PPP is predicated on a simplistic input = output model of learning. "It assumes that learning is 'straight-line', that following a certain routine will guarantee the required results" (Scrivener 1996: 98). Nevertheless, the problem is not that it is a model; simply that it is a flawed one.

On pots

ARC, on the other hand, is not a model. Inviting trainee teachers to assemble the components of a lesson in any manner they see fit (CAR, RRCA, RCA, ACRR etc., etc.) does not provide them with images of expert practice, since – **pace** Scrivener's claim – experts manifestly do not throw together lessons out of arbitrarily ordered elements. It may seem so because their teaching is so fluid – but this very fluidity is due to the teacher's familiarity with their mental script. And this mental script, or image, or what have you, has been acquired only by dint of conscious attention to models.

If I may be permitted one more analogy, the process of learning to design lessons seems not unlike the process Japanese apprentice potters go through, judging by this description:

> Once the initial cup form has been mastered – and this may take six months or a year – new forms will be assigned for practice. The newer forms require less practice because some of the basic skills and control of the materials has been mastered on the initial form... Additional forms to be learned require the internalization of the shape, so that they may be produced automatically and without intentional effort... Creative adaptations of forms, thought of as art pieces in themselves, come only after mastery of precisely controlled standard forms. (Singleton 1989: 19-20)

Learning to teach, too, requires the internalization of shapes – of lesson shapes – so that lessons may be produced automatically and without intentional effort. Good lessons are like pots – not because they have an intrinsic beauty (although some do!) – but because they are functional: they deliver opportunities for learning. They do this best when they are structured – structured to synchronise with the learners' needs, styles, expectations: these are the constraints that determine the structures that are permissable. At the same time, the lesson structure releases the teacher so as to be able to take maximum advantage of "here and now" opportunities for facilitating learning. Lesson structures, I argue, are like pots and need to be acquired through the "mastery of precisely controlled standard forms". Since ARC rejects the notion of "standard forms" I dispute the claim that it is "an enabling model for training" (Scrivener and Redpath 1993: 70). It is not a model – in any sense of the word – and it is not enabling.

Moreover, variations such as Lovelock's (1996), by proposing not three but four moveable elements (Contextualisation – Focus – Practice – Use), serve only to complicate the picture further, risking even greater mystification on the part of the trainee teacher, without any real gains in either comprehensiveness or applicability. (It is also worrying that neither Scrivener's nor Lovelock's rationales make any reference to developments in cognitive science or second language acquisition theory, as if the way learners learn and the way teachers teach are two mutually exclusive disciplines. This, coupled with an equally worrying failure to reflect developments in educational theory – specifically, the way teachers learn to teach – does little to dispel the popular view that TEFL is to education what aromatherapy is to medicine).

Of course, proponents of ARC (and its near relations) could argue that it is not only possible, but preferable, that trainees should experiment with different sequences, construct different combinations, and derive lesson images in which they have a personal investment and of which they therefore have greater ownership. "By removing the idea that there is such a thing as an ideal or 'right' way to teach we free people. We free teachers and trainees to explore and learn and find the best ways for themselves and for their students" (Scrivener 1996: 99). Is this really freedom – or is it some kind of limbo state in which trainees are casting around in a cloud of unknowing, wondering why their mentors are so doggedly refusing to hand over craft knowledge? Given that the ordering of the three ingredients, A, R, and C, allows for at least six permutations (assuming no repetition of elements) it might take several false starts (and considerable humiliation) before the trainee hits on a "right" combination. More seriously, it might convey the impression that lesson planning (and ergo teaching) is an unprincipled, capricious enterprise, that "anything goes" so long as you can label it correctly.

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And there *is* a right combination (or, better, right combinations): there are ways of planning that are conducive to learning and there are ways that are not, and – despite protestations that we still have no coherent theory of second language acquisition – we know enough, surely, about language learning to hazard an informed guess as to the qualities of effective teaching, and hence the qualities of an effective lesson. If not, what right do we have to call ourselves trainers?

This is not a defence of a "method" approach to teaching: it is an appeal to common sense. The real freedom for trainees is the freedom not to have to worry about the macro-structures of lessons, but to be able to get down to the real business of teaching, that is the "cut and thrust" – the interaction and engagement with the learners, out of which real learning opportunities arise.

Training with images

What approach should we adopt then? Both Kennedy (1993) and Scrivener seem to point the way, the former with her "impure" prescriptivism and the latter with his lesson "types" (or "images").

I envisage a programme for an initial training course which simply has, as its input components, sessions titled "The Reading Lesson"; "The Listening Lesson"; "The Speaking Lesson"; "The Grammar Lesson"; "The Integrated Skills Lesson" etc. The PPP sequence might then find its rightful place as one of a couple of alternatives for the design of "The Grammar Lesson" (the other perhaps being the "Output-feedback" model (Thornbury 1995). These lesson models could be inductively derived from classroom observation or video viewing. Alternatively, a deductive approach could be adopted where, for example, different models designed to target the same objectives could be compared (lesson plan 1 and lesson plan 2) and then trialled in teaching practice; or, in advance of trialling, a model could be derived from a theoretical description. Either way, by addressing the need that novice teachers have for a clear mental representation of different types of language lessons, we are both reducing their anxiety and saving them the trouble of having to re-invent the wheel every time they teach.

Conclusion

The popularity of Scrivener's ARC owes a lot, I think, to frustration at the limitations of the traditional PPP model, and it would be churlish not to welcome any attempt at providing a viable alternative. The fact that ARC is grounded in the practical realities of the training classroom, and that it has been subject to constant refinement and reappraisal means it deserves to be taken seriously. And if it truly helps trainers free trainees from unnatural constraints on their resourcefulness, so much the better. Nevertheless, like any innovation that is adopted uncritically, it is not without its problems: Scrivener is the first to admit this. In this article I have attempted to sketch some of these problems. Specifically, I believe that the ARC components are nothing more than the old PPP components dressed up, and therefore only applicable within the existing grammardriven paradigm; and, because trainees need models of good practice, I am sceptical as to whether ARC, which provides no model, is as enabling as is claimed.

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NOTES:

1. Interestingly, difficulties in applying the classifications do not seem to concern Scrivener greatly: "Don't worry too much if you can't definitely decide on an ARC component; choose the one that seems to fit you best (Scrivener 1996: 104).

2. I am grateful to Roger Hunt for this idea.

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Language Matters

Professional language – Is it useful or is it a restriction close to censorship?

by Tessa Woodward

Presumably we are happy when the language learners and teachers that we work with express themselves in clear, interesting language. When writing we help them to work towards a readable, accessible style. Of course we do need special terminology in our working world. We need to be able to refer to things swiftly when talking to colleagues. But many of us try to keep a check on the use of even this terminology so that it doesn't gallop away with us and we don't sound as if we had been using jargon generators.(See Woodward 1987).

As editor of The Teacher Trainer I spend a lot of time encouraging authors to simplify and clarify their writing so that their messages can shine through their texts and are not hidden in bulky sentences packed with professional jargon. I was interested then to read of a mini- research project where the Flesch test (Flesch 1948) was applied to ELT journals. The Flesch test is a test of readability based on scores for sentence length and the average number of syllables per 100 words. A score of 0 on a Flesch test would mean that an article or journal was virtually unreadable! Apart from the interest of discovering the readability scores of various periodicals, even more interesting to me was the fact that 26 lecturers of Applied Linguistics at the University of Brunei, when asked to rate ten ELT journals in terms of perceived prestige, rated the most unreadable as having the highest prestige and the most readable as having lowest prestige.(I wish I could give you the reference to this study but it was sent in by a reader on a ripped sheet and all attempts to find the authors or source have so far been unsuccessful. Please write in if you know about the study.)

The article goes on to ask if perhaps academics are keen on clarity in STUDENT writing but actually more impressed by LACK of clarity in their colleagues' writing.

The reader who sent in the article said he thought that The Teacher Trainer would "do alright on the Flesch test" by which I guess he meant that we are readable but when judged by some academics would be rated as having low prestige!

If the question of writing clearly or unclearly were simply a matter of happy readers or high prestige rankings then this would not be a very important issue. Other articles sent my way, however suggest that this is not a trivial matter. There is concern over a lack of communication between the public and "experts", for example, scientists. (see Russell 1994). "A fully fledged scientist....labours under at least two serious handicaps when it comes to communication outside his or her discipline: a lack of experience in reading and discussion, and a training in writing a very peculiar and arcane type of prose".(P16).

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There is apparently a lack of communication between National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) staff and students and those formulating the assessment criteria (Held 1995).

"Even experienced tutors find the standards (the NVQ statements of competence) impossible to understand, let alone bi-lingual students or students who are less confident with written English".(P17).

But in our own field why should we worry? Surely as language professionals we will be just the people to see through pomposity and jargon. We can translate it when it's written by others and produce better ourselves. But what if we would like to get published in a journal of moderate prestige or take a higher degree and thus be judged by academics? Can we, if we are "pro-clarity" supporters do this on our own terms, in our own words?

A furious letter sent in by an MA candidate suggests that the answer is "No! Not always!"

" I wrote a first draft of something I FELT. I knew when I handed it in it would be too strong and my tutor would say "This is not what's required!" and that's what's happened. It has to be re-shaped, re-presented, re-organised and re-written. I have to fit my ideas into the scheme of the so-called EFL tradition. I have to discuss the EFL filters (you know... Widdowson and Brumfit and Ellis and Jones) as if they were real. I have to fit MY ideas (" there is no call for originality at MA level") into their way of seeing things. Active verbs have to be changed into passives. I have to pepper the text with impersonal phrases such as "It has been argued that..." One of the tutors actually suggested I go to the library and take dictation from past MA candidates' theses! No "anecdotes" are allowed. I have to pretend I have no experience of my own and that everything has been thought of first by somebody else. Well if I want the MA I have to churn out 20,000 dull, conventional words sprinkled with references. "It has been argued (See Blitherhythe and Wragwort) that (Widdowshins and Snortworthy) the weather (ibid) is fine today. (See Precipitation and Claptrap).

Maybe sometime, if I ever get past these gate-keepers, I'll get my version of what I want to say typed. Then people can read both my version and the MA one with the phrase dictation in, and see which one is more interesting, which taught me more and which is more useful!"

This irate candidate bears out Larry Ward's argument that dissertations, (he feels especially at doctorate level), can be fatal to your writing style! (Ward 86). But more seriously, do we have a problem here? If "getting ahead" involves writing the odd article or studying for a master's degree or a doctorate, then does it mean we are forced to mangle our prose to get ahead? Is this a kind of censorship where the real, the direct, the meaningful are toned down, re-phrased or deleted? Do you feel that you have been gagged, censored or silenced when you have tried to express something important to you in your work or study and in your own way? If you do, write in and tell us. Confidentiality assured!

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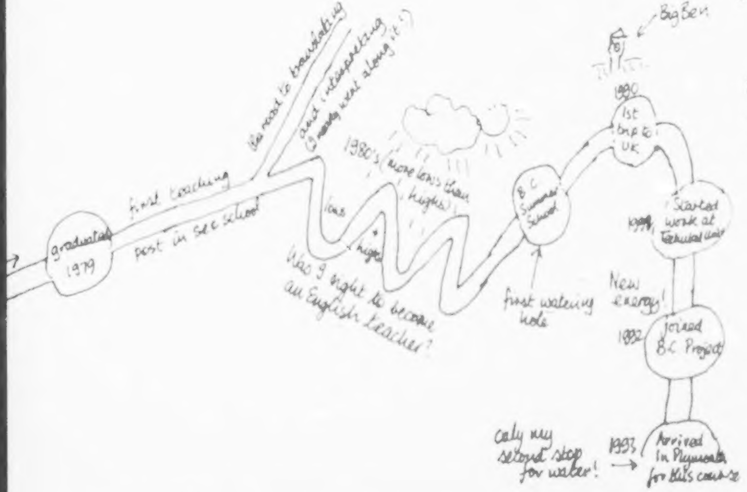
We look forward to reading your article!

Career Pathways

Over the years I have worked on in-service training courses of varying lengths, with participants from a wide variety of professional backgrounds. A particular challenge which I and colleagues have faced is how to 'unlock' the wealth of experience in a training room at the start of a course and to make it available quickly as a starting point for reflection and an open exchange of ideas. The activity described below, which I first tried out on a British Council Summer School for trainers in 1990 seems to meet that need, and I thought it worth sharing here as it has become part of our training repertoire at the International Education Centre. Here are the instructions given to course participants.

1. Take a piece of A4 paper and a pen or pencil.
2. Think back over your career to date and imagine it as a kind of pathway. Think of the turning points, people and events that have influenced you, courses you've been on, books you have read, etc. Close your eyes if you wish and try to visualise the pathway in three dimensions.
3. Now draw the pathway as you see it, using whatever images you like for the key events and encounters. Your pathway should lead right up to today.
4. When you've finished, write your name in the corner of the paper and hang it on the wall with Blu-tac or pins.
5. Now walk round, look at all the pathways, and talk to anyone whose career interests you in any way.

The whole activity usually takes 15-20 minutes. Here is an example of pathway produced by a Central European participant on a three-month certificate course:


graduated 1979
first teaching post in sec school
the road to translating and interpreting (? many went along it?)
1980's (more lows than highs)
lows
highs
Was I right to become an English teacher?
B C Summer School
first watering hole
Big Ben
1990 1st trip to UK
1991 Started work at Technical Univ
New energy!
1992 Joined B.C Project
only my second stop for water!
1993 Arrived in Plymouth for this course

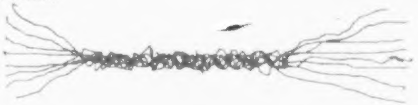
(the size of the circles indicates the relative importance of the event in this participant's career)

The 'viewing' stage usually gives rise to animated talk, as participants discover common ground and ask questions about each other's experience. The process of professional exchange has begun.

The activity seems to have the following benefits

- participants become aware of the collective experience in the room
- everyone contributes on an equal basis (trainers too!)
- the 'pathway' metaphor seems to be powerful but simple and clear
- participants stop and think back (often fondly!) over their career to date, and the route which has led them to the course
- participants become aware of the diversity among them, and the need to compromise over objectives
- individual experiences are valued and talked about. A lot of baggage can be unloaded quickly and relatively painlessly
- participants disclose only what they choose to
- the activity helps to establish a sharing and open group ethos
- trainers gain speedy access to important background data about each participant: this is often valuable as a resource during the course
- the activity is fun and it provokes talk

Taking the image further, the course itself can be seen as a brief interlude when a number of pathways become entwined. I sometimes illustrate this with a picture along these lines:


the course
before the course
after the course

Seen this way, the course is a rare opportunity for interaction, a group learning experience, before participants return to their unique individual pathways. This image also helps participants to think ahead to the individual courses of action they wish to follow when they return to their regular job routines.

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CURRENT RESEARCH

The attitudes of French nationals on a UK PGCE course, and their development through the course

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Introduction

In a time of new initiatives such as dual degrees at PGCE level recognised in France and Britain, and financed by Brussels to encourage greater teaching staff mobility inside Europe, the number of French nationals opting to train and teach in England is growing rapidly. This recent phenomenon clearly has implications in the context of teacher training, as the distinctive needs of this new population of students have to be taken into account. The Post Graduate Certificate of Education – PGCE – is a one year training course for students who have completed a first degree in their academic subject. The role of schools in the training of PGCE students is growing. In reality it is getting a rather mixed reception within schools for lack of proper time allocation for mentors, and the relative shortage of school placements in modern languages due to smaller-sized departments. It is therefore increasingly important that students, regardless of their nationality, are adequately prepared in Higher Education institutions. It is important too to try to identify the needs of French nationals enrolled on PGCE programmes and to look at their integration in British schools. One way of understanding these needs is to look at their attitudes and beliefs, and see how these develop through the year.

This paper reports on findings on this topic from a case study carried out at Westminster College during 1994-1995. Although not involved in dual degree schemes at this stage, a mixed recruitment has been favoured for the Post Graduate Course of Education in Modern Languages for many years. This has been achieved first by sending documentation about the PGCE course to foreign assistants in secondary schools, and secondly by spreading the same information round partner universities in France, which are in close contact with the college under the ERASMUS scheme for B.A and B.Ed programmes. (ERASMUS is an EC-funded exchange programme between universities for the mobility of students within Europe). As a result of this, numbers of French nationals on the French PGCE course at Westminster vary from year to year, usually between a quarter and a third of the total numbers in French.

This case study focuses on all French nationals on the PGCE course at Westminster College during 1994-1995. Initial data was gathered in early October in the form of a fairly free group discussion about what these students perceived to be the main issues at that stage. Evidence about their progress through the year was gathered through observation of their contribution to curriculum sessions in college in semester one, their curriculum assignments, and discussions with supervising tutors and some mentors in semester two during their time in school. Students were finally interviewed individually towards the end of the academic year. Although their initial interviews for admission to the PGCE course were not recorded, some of the issues raised there were also drawn on.

Factors in deciding to train in UK

Chronologically, the first thing worth noting is the ease with which most of these students from France had made the decision to train and start their professional life in Britain, and how straightforward most expected it to be. Evidence from this study suggests that most French students embarking on a traditional PGCE course will make this decision after a year spent in Britain as a language assistant, and that not only will any acclimatisation needed have taken place already and some degree of integration in Britain achieved, but that it also appears that they feel reasonably positive about what they experienced in school in that year. They will in fact often have multiple reasons for wanting to settle down over here and these will usually range from hoping to avoid the French route to the teaching profession with its highly competitive exams, the Capes and Agregation (followed in the best of cases by a first post traditionally "lost" in the less inviting parts of Northern France), to more positive reasons such as the desire for a new experience, a challenge, the wish to embrace a bigger dimension rather than passively following what would be for them an ordinary route. Some of them also perceived the British teaching profession as being a more fulfilling one with its greater emphasis on the pastoral dimension of the job and the community spirit which reigns in schools, and one which they therefore actively want to be part of. What these students seem to have in common is a truly European perspective. Settling down in Britain has clearly been for them a major decision, but one which, as language students, they perceive as somehow a logical choice.

The question of identity

Interestingly, though, as the PGCE year went by, these same students who initially spoke most enthusiastically of the European dimension, seemed to have rediscovered their French identity and to have done so with varying intensity and pride. This was particularly striking in the case of successful students whose integration into their teaching practice school had been fully and painlessly achieved, and whose understanding of the methodology had been rapidly acquired. Evidence seems to suggest that students in this category arrived at that stage once immersed and at ease with the school context, and this did not therefore arise from negative feelings about their current experience.This expressed itself mainly by an increased intellectual curiosity where French culture is concerned. One student, who was considered highly successful said in May : *"Mon attitude envers la France a changé : j'ai maintenant une plus grande curiosité intellectuelle pour tout ce qui est culture française"*. She went on to explain that she wanted to remain what she was; she wanted to keep her identity: *"Je tiens à rester ce que je suis, et je ne suis d'ailleurs pas consciente d'avoir eu à changer mes convictions ni par diplomatie ni par persuasion."* These statements were not, however – and this was clear from her global attitude and approach to her professional duties – in contradiction with earlier claims to European awareness, and open-mindedness. In her case, it seemed as if it was precisely the fact that her teaching of her own language and culture in school was so rewarding and meaningful to her, which made her re-examine and deepen her French culture, thereby developing her own competence in her subject. It is interesting to note that although the way in which she operated in school was new to her, it did not appear to her to be in contradiction with her beliefs. It was surprisingly in contrast with the case of a minority of British undergraduates on the B.Ed course at Westminster, who expressed in a questionnaire survey of their experience rather blunt anti-European views on their return from a semester in France on the Erasmus scheme. Although some tended to state that their stay had made them feel part of a wider community, a few had come back with the opposite attitude. One of them wrote : *"I have changed in that I now appreciate many aspects of Britain much more. I am proud to be British"*. And another : *"I do not see myself as a citizen of Europe. Living in France for a term has shown me that I am very much English or British."* What the French and British students who expressed themselves in these ways had in common is a sense of national identity : neither group was willing nor considered it desirable to surrender this identity. Constrasting attitudes can be detected though, through their choice of words to express it : the French student quoted above spoke in terms of increased intellectual curiosity for her own culture and could substantiate it with clear examples, whilst the British student appeared to be speaking more in terms of nationalistic pride. This perhaps betrayed a value judgment about her own country compared to the foreign country, which could be appropriately qualified as chauvinistic. This was absent from the French student's discourse. It seems likely that contextual reasons best explain the disparity between British and French views here, among which the fact that undergraduates are younger and culturally less sophisticated than PGCE students, and thus feel more exposed and vulnerable in a foreign country; they have not been put yet in the position of responsible professionals; and even more significantly they have not chosen to be there, as their semester in France is a compulsory and assessed part of their course. Hence, they appear to have a more limited outlook and a possibly more passive and naive approach to the whole experience.

Self-perceptions of students

In the course of their interviews for admission to the PGCE course, usually in the summer term preceding the beginning of their PGCE course, most of the French candidates said that they were not aware of any handicap they might experience during the course as foreign nationals training in Britain. The majority having experienced the position of language assistants in secondary schools, they expressed confidence where the British educational system was concerned, both in terms of their knowledge of its workings, and their ability to cope with it successfully. They in fact tended to see their Frenchness as an unmitigated advantage over British students: both in linguistic and cultural terms, they felt that they were in the best position possible for the teaching of French. At this stage, no concern was expressed about things such as their possible linguistic disadvantage when dealing for instance with administrative responsibilities, or when cooperating with colleagues. No concern was expressed either about their possible lack of common references with their future pupils, and therefore their potential difficulty in communicating with them beyond the French classroom. One might infer from this that they see their teaching role very much in the light of their experience as pupils in France at this early stage, and although faintly aware of the differing role of the British teacher, it has not sunk in that there might be some initial difficulty in carrying out successful pastoral duties, which comprise among other things the role of a form tutor, the one to one counselling that frequently takes place, and the involvement with the home. This is still, although they are not aware of it, unknown territory, it is clear that they do not know exactly what these duties comprise. The role of the British teacher is however the first aspect of school life they mention at their interview for admission when asked to identify broad differences between French and British schools. They are aware that British teachers have a wider and more ambitious role than French teachers who are still widely perceived as having as their sole responsibility the academic development of their pupils. What they know of the British teachers' pastoral duties at this stage is limited to the general routine of the school involving a number of clubs and after-school activities, and the existence of register periods and assemblies. Nonetheless, they spoke very positively about the general routine of the school.

The pastoral role of teachers

Although they confirmed their confidence in their own knowledge in late October after their first visit to their

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teaching practice school, it became retrospectively clear to them by the end of the course that what they knew of the system was indeed limited and did not extend beyond the general routine of the school. As one of them said : *"J'avais l'impression d'en savoir long avant de commencer, mais je me rends compte maintenant qu'il me faudra encore au moins un an ou deux pour vraiment absorber le système correctement."* Unaware of her previous statement in October indicating complete confidence about having the necessary knowledge to embark on a successful career, another one said : *"J'ai complètement appris ce qu'est le rôle du prof."* She then went on to say that she enjoyed this aspect of her work, and that communicating with her pupils came to her naturally : *"Discuter avec les élèves me parait normal et m'est venu naturellement."* And another : *"Ce rôle pastoral est intéressant : c'est important de savoir ce qui se passe dans la tête des élèves.* Many of them spoke of tackling their pastoral duties with energy and determination in the course of the year, and perceived these duties as a logical continuation of their role as subject teachers. It emerged, however, that for a few, an in-depth understanding of the pastoral role had not always been achieved. One of them who spoke particularly enthusiastically about this aspect of her work explained that, in her perception, pastoral duties were incompatible with academic ones, and that she was relieved at not having to teach French to her tutor group. Talking about her tutor group, she said: *"La difficulté a été de m'inserrer au début, mais j'y suis arrivée en essayant d'être proche d'eux, de rigoler et de plaisanter avec eux, de les avoir par les sentiments"* ... *"Je n'aimerais pas avoir à enseigner une classe dont je suis le form tutor. On ne peut pas avoir la même attitude avec une classe qu'on doit diriger, qu'on doit faire travailler et mener à un examen et des gens qu'on doit aider, dont on doit comprendre les problèmes."* There was in her case, indeed, a discrepancy in her attitude as a French teacher and a form tutor. She could not link the two roles through some degree of misunderstanding of both, and whilst in her new role as a form tutor she found that she could create a different kind of relationship with her pupils – albeit a slightly misguided one – as a French teacher she was aware that she was reproducing a known model which she had experienced as a child and perceived as safe: she tended to stand firmly at the front, and avoid any interaction among her pupils. Another French student became very negative about the pastoral aspect of the work in the course of her interview at the end of the course. Although she started by saying that British pupils were as a rule more open with their teachers and felt comfortable about approaching them as a result of pastoral care in schools, she soon expressed deep scepticism about the usefulness of form periods and PSE programmes : *Leur histoire de form periods pour parler de certains sujets, moi je ne vois pas bien l'intérêt. C'est beaucoup de bavardages, et les élèves prennent ça comme une corvée.* She then goes on to say: *Et je ne vois pas l'intérêt de leur demander s'ils ont des amis, ce qu'ils pensent de l'uniforme, parce qu'après,* personne ne le lit. Although her guess was that the purpose of such communication was to get to know the pupils better, she then made it clear that this was not in her mind a beneficial exercise: *En France, jamais je n'ai parlé à un prof de mes problèmes, de ma famille, et c'est pas plus mal comme ça. Ca dramatise plus de leur faire dire leurs problèmes.*

Students' fluency in English

What they all confirmed by the end of the course was confidence in their own mastery of English within the school context. None of them had been aware of failings on their own parts, and although some had felt peripheral in the general running of the school and even possibly a bit isolated, they could attribute this to their position as students. Interestingly, this claim to competence in English was contradicted in one case by a curriculum tutor and in another by a mentor. Collaborative work had been made difficult in both cases by the students' lack of fluency and comprehension in English. Besides, one of the students was described by her mentor as insensitive and possibly even rude in her dealings with colleagues in school. Evidence seems to indicate that lack of fluency coupled with possible lack of real understanding of social and hierarchical rules generally in any working place, and more specifically in a British school, may have led to certain kinds of behaviour being misinterpreted as insensitivity and rudeness.

Language teaching methodology

The other point which came up in the course of their admission interviews was the question of methodology. As language assistants, some of them had drawn two main conclusions: first, that teachers of French do not teach much grammar, and second, that they have low expectations. It appears that the first perception had arisen from the nature of their work as language assistants : having spent a large proportion of their time working on role-plays with small groups of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils in preparation for their GCSE oral exam, they had become all too familiar with the transactional aspect of the GCSE French syllabus and had concluded that teachers of French do not teach much grammar. From their occasional presence in the classroom when they had been asked to give assistance to the teacher during lessons, their perception had been that teachers had as a rule fairly low expectations in languages. It is interesting to note that they stood by these two early statements modifying them only slightly when they reached the end of the course. Many finished the year unsure about the place of grammar in modern languages teaching, having observed different practices over the year, but with the common view that fewer grammar explanations than they would wish actually occurred. Linked to this was their belief that pupils in low-ability sets are insufficiently stimulated and would benefit from more structured and grammatical input in a communicative context. Most felt strongly about this, and they reported on their own successful attempts, sometimes against the advice of colleagues, to engage their pupils in low-ability groups in communicative grammar activities. Whilst it would appear that some of these French students did find it difficult, because of their own schooling, to go beyond grammatical sophistication as a measure of success, there also seemed to be here an encouraging element of optimism in the form of high expectations which is presumably of considerable value at the start of a career.

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At the end of the course, they said without exception that the communicative method was entirely new to them. It was clear that what they had seen as language assistants had not been significant in their development in terms of methodology, and in spite of their misgivings concerning their perceived shortage of grammar input, the overwhelming majority had become committed to this method. Having experienced as pupils an approach relying heavily on grammar explanations from the front followed by written exercises, they could immediately see the advantages of a method which in their own words :... *"donne envie de communiquer dans une autre langue, crée le besoin de se servir de la langue"*. Some appeared to embrace this new method with all the more enthusiasm and determination having had to suffer under a different regime, and they were able to produce imaginative and varied materials and tasks. Others, however, appeared to find the application of the method difficult, and attributed this to their French schooling : *"Le système français rigide n'encourage pas l'ouverture et la créativité. Si quand j'étais jeune j'avais fait des choses comme ça, j'arriverais mieux à produire ce genre d'activités. Je me sens rigide dans ce que je fais."*

Pupils' response

Although they acknowledged by the end of the course that they still had a lot to learn, both as new professionals and as French nationals coming to grips with a different system, they did not feel that they were starting their careers with a serious handicap. Most experienced some degree of frustration at not feeling equipped either linguistically or culturally early in the year to contribute to group discussions with their tutor, but they could measure their own progress. Globally, they still thought that the advantages of being a French national outweighed the disadvantages. They felt that they gained immediate credibility with the pupils in terms of the subject matter, which made up for the pupils' frequent assumption that as foreigners, and newcomers, they might not be well-informed about general management and sanctions. Interestingly, though, one of them found she rapidly lost all credibility and was at a clear disadvantage when teaching Spanish. In the early days, she was surprised to hear some pupils express clear chauvinism : *"What is she on about, she's not even English."*

Students' overall experience

It was striking when looking back on the course as a whole that many expressed surprise at the contents of the course which they saw as largely practical. Having left behind a system of teacher training based on elitist academic achievement, this category of students found the acquisition of teaching skills on the PGCE course an endeavour they were not prepared for and found difficult to adapt to. These students admitted that they initially approached the content of the course with some degree of reluctance and were slightly dismissive about the material presented to them, but that they could see the importance of it retrospectively, once they started teaching continuously in school in the second semester.

This particular cohort of French students were all awarded their PGCE at the end of the year, although it is fair to say that they had reached different points in their development towards becoming autonomous and reflective practitioners. None of them had really expected it to be such hard work.

Conclusion

Several points emerge from these findings :

- It would appear that in the case of this particular group of French nationals, their experience as language assistants had given them a false sense of security as professionals. This sense of security was increased by their belief that being French put them at a straight advantage. This led some of them to start the course with preconceptions in terms of methodology which had arisen from their limited observation as language assistants, and which they were reluctant to question. The two most frequent preconceptions which they expressed early in the year concerned their perceived absence of grammar in modern languages teaching, especially but not exclusively with lower ability groups. Although this may well constitute an accurate image of current practice in some languages departments, the very limited experience of language assistants which consists of a few contact hours often taught in isolation, and the very nature of the job with its emphasis on conversational skills, would be unlikely to lead to a comprehensive and analytical assessment of current modern languages methodology. This very point is to some extent proved by the students' admission in another survey at the end of the year that they knew nothing of the communicative method when they started the course.
- Although they were aware that the PGCE course had little in common with a CAPES course, and had indeed chosen the former among other reasons because it is not an elitist academic course, a sizeable number were surprised by the content of the course which they still perceived at the end of the year as essentially practical in comparison, thereby under-estimating the demands made on them.This produced initially in some of these students what must have been an unreceptive attitude which might have impeded their progress at first.
- Evidence shows that they started with little or no understanding of the demands of the pastoral responsibilities of British teachers, and of the philosophy underlying them, and that some degree of misapprehension still remained at the end of the course. A small minority indeed, expressed markedly negative attitudes to this aspect of schooling in the UK. Although this might have been influenced by the observation of unsuccessful practice during their placement, some of the comments made by the students show clear opposition to the very notion of pastoral care in schools.
- They tended to under-estimate the linguistic and cultural gap they had to fill in order to be able to function efficiently and with sensitivity in the school context, and develop a fruitful relationship with both

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colleagues and pupils. Their own perceptions of their mastery of English (and of certain social rules) were occasionally at odds with those of teachers in schools, potentially creating a gulf between them and the school which demands further investigation.

- The principles of the communicative method in language teaching were entirely new to them, and especially when under stress, there was a tendency for the weaker ones to adopt a teacher-centered approach based on rigorous grammatical progression which they had experienced as pupils themselves, and felt safe with. However, a number also developed strategies for combining the requirements they encountered on the course to use communicative principles with their own strong commitments to more explicit grammar teaching, which had become established as a result of their education in France.
- A re-discovery of their French identity seemed to occur in the course of the year. In the case of successful and well-adjusted students, this took the form of increased intellectual curiosity for French culture in general.

Although clear issues concerning the development and thus the needs of French nationals on the PGCE course have been identified in this study, it is worth remembering that the population of British students on the course is in itself extremely diverse in terms of social class and educational background. We must therefore be cautious before we can attribute the totality of the points listed above to national characteristics. Some British students will have had their full school career as pupils in private schools, and although the first cohorts of the GCSE generation begin to reach us, their experience might have been just as remote as that of French nationals from the current scene, albeit in a different way. With all the recent changes in schools, one might also argue that the British population of PGCE students have lost touch with school life, and that their experience as pupils has not equipped them for their new role as teachers either. It is therefore worth asking if the needs of French nationals differ from the needs of British students to such an extent that they should be offered distinctive training. A further aspect of this study is clearly that it raises more general issues about initial teacher-training which are potentially applicable to all modern languages students.

There are, however, real issues emerging from these findings which concern French nationals and need to be addressed in order to achieve better integration of this category of students in schools, and there might be a place here for a more targeted type of training. One might usefully develop induction programmes to this end, as well as devising extra sessions through the year in the HE institution to monitor centrally what happens and attempt to remedy difficulties as they arise. It is also very important to develop ways of addressing these issues with mentors.

QA

Questions & Answers

If you work on your own or without very many trainer colleagues, then you might like to join the Questions and Answers column. It acts like a postal staffroom. People send in the sort of question that they might toss out in a staffroom full of trainers, if they ever had the chance to be in one. I then either take the question to a gathering of trainers at a conference and canvass for answers or else other trainers simply write in giving their twopennyworth. Let's start with some questions I have already managed to get answers to.

Q. Language Teaching Publications (LTP) is such a dinky little book publisher. How come it started and still manages to exist when other, bigger publishers have gone under?

A. LTP was founded in January 1981 by Jimmie Hill and Michael Lewis. It was founded because we had had several extremely negative experiences of publishers both in this country and abroad. We were determined that we could publish our own work better than anyone else. Our current list runs to over 60 titles by around 30 different authors.

One of our earliest philosophies was that language teaching is teaching LANGUAGE. We are proud that people can pick up one of our books and it is recognisably an "LTP book". Michael Lewis's book "The lexical approach" has recently won recognition too and much of our current publishing is now informed by it.

We have survived because we have never tried to be a smaller version of a Big Publisher. All those other publishers who have been taken over have made the mistake of trying to compete with the big boys on their own terms. It can't be done! However, I think, without being too immodest, that the secret of our success has been the consistent direction that Michael and I have brought to our books. Publlishing in the end comes down to a publisher and an author. We have made mistakes and had successes and, luckily more of the latter than the former!

Jimmie Hill.

Q. How did you get into teacher training? (or did they get you?)

This question was answered by 15 teacher trainers from as many different countries while they were on a course in Kent, England.The answers were:

A. I was asked to do some workshops, observations etc by more experienced teachers and trainers. Once I had started, I liked it.

A. I was asked to apply for the job at our college.(2)

A. I was asked to do it and then ....morally forced to accept it/ started to enjoy it/ did it on trial for 2 years/(4)

A. I was asked to think about it and then I applied for the job.

A. It was my crazy and fatal decision!

A. There was a vacancy in the paper and I sent in an application. I've stayed ever since.(2)

A. I walked in the door.

A. Teacher training was dumped on me. Training for the job came much later.

A. I decided I wanted to be one. It's not such a bad job.

A. I was the only person in the country with a Dip TEFL. A group of teachers approached me to ask if I would run a Dip TEFL course for them!

Q. Recently a friend of mine came back from a conference saying, "Did you know that they have now isolated 8 different intelligences?" What on earth is she talking about?

A. Some people suggest that while intelligence tests such as IQ tests concentrate on Linguistic and Logical-mathematical abilities, there are many other different types of ability or intelligence. Some examples are: Musical, Kinesthetic (as when you are learning ballet, karate or riding). You could add Visual-Spatial for the type of person who writes their shopping list according to the path they take through the supermarket. Interpersonal intelligence shows up in people who have a good sense of how to empathise with others and Intrapersonal in people who give themselves a good time on a solitary walk! That makes 7. You could perhaps add Metaphorical for the poet, Jesus the parable teller or a Taoist master, although some people might include that under linguistic. Perhaps there is also a spiritual intelligence and a natural one too.. Mario Rinvolucri, Bonnie Tsai and Tessa Woodward.

If you have a question you would like to put to other trainers, just send it in. Alternatively, do you have any answers to these questions?

Q. Which are the main EFL noticeboards on the World Wide Web? Are there any specially for teacher trainers?

Q. What big things have they discovered about grammar from the new oral corpora?

Q. How do you get quiet trainees to talk in feedback sessions?

Q. What is NLP?

Journal Exchanges

"The Teacher Trainer" has arranged
journal exchanges with

IATEFL Newsletter (UK)
English Language Teaching Journal (UK)
Modern English Teacher (UK)
English Teachers' Journal (Israel)
RELC Journal (Singapore)
Teacher Education Quarterly (USA)
Forum (USA)
Focus on English (India)
TESOL Matters (USA)
University of Hawaii Working Papers in ESL

and is abstracted by 'Language Teaching',
The British Education Index, the ERIC clearing house
and Contents Pages in Education.

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Train Ourselves First?

by Wu Xin, Southwest China Teachers' University, P. R. China

Introduction:

English teacher training in China is undertaken mainly in the English department of teachers' or normal universities/colleges. Trainees study either under 3-year or 4-year-programmes. They are expected to achieve two aims at the end of the training – to learn the English language and to be able to teach English. Current programmes tend to put more weight on the studying of English (See Zhang Xin Wei 1990, Chen ZiAn 1992). However, in this article, I will focus on the development of the teaching of the ELT Methodology component. This is the aspect that we, as teacher trainers in the classroom, are able to control.

The teaching of ELT Methodology in the Chinese teachers' universities, like any other professional courses, has its own history and has already formed a certain tradition. This can be analysed as follows.

Theory Separated From Practice

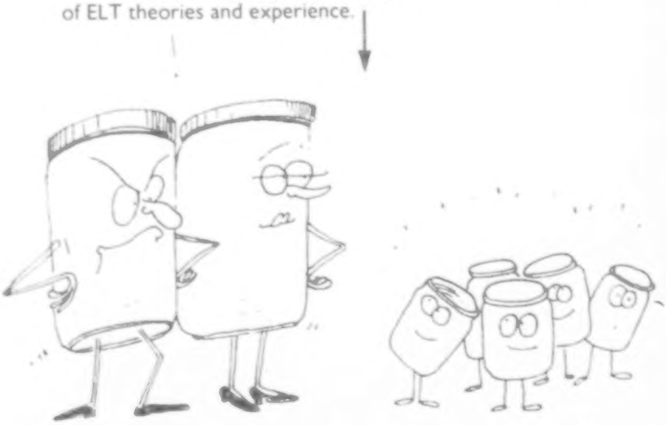
The learning of ELT theory and the practice of teaching are seen as two separate activities. It is believed that theories must be learnt before practice. In most Chinese teacher's universities/colleges, the first two years of the English teacher trainees' four-year-course are mainly devoted to learning the language. At the same time, trainees study theoretical courses, such as Education and Psychology. Rules, principles and theories are the main content in these two courses. In the third or fourth year, trainees have ELT Methodology. This course lasts for one year and is usually divided into two parts: lectures in the first semester in the university classroom and teaching practice in the second semester in the school classroom. In the university classroom, Methodology lecturers give theoretical lectures on how to teach English. As it is believed that "discipline-based knowledge is the cornerstone of good teaching" (Paine 1992:189), trainees are expected to understand and remember rules and principles of language teaching and are tested on these. Having finished the study of the theories, trainees are sent to middle schools for teaching practice (TP). In TP, they are expected to apply the language teaching theories learnt in the lectures to the practice in real language classrooms. It is believed that once trainees master theoretical knowledge, they are automatically capable of practising it.

Repetition and Imitation

In teaching practice, seeing what to do is considered more important than understanding why it is done or trying to improve it. Usually, methodology lecturers and other lecturers go with the trainees to the schools as their supervisors. They tell trainees what is good and what should be done. The English teachers in the schools are models to be observed and followed. Their opinions on what is "good" are also important. In the first week of the six-week TP, trainees, in groups of 4 or 6, observe how the school teacher teaches. They take notes on what the teacher does in class, and talk to him/her about his/her experience. Then, trainees teach the class in turn, and are assessed. Each of them could teach for about one week (6 hours altogether). There is not enough time for them to reflect on their teaching or to improve it. If the teaching is not as good as expected, the trainee is regarded as either not having learnt ELT Methodology well, or as having failed to apply theory to practice, or, as having failed to learn from the school teacher. Obviously, all these judgements encourage repetition or imitation in the teaching practice rather than reflection or innovation.

Passive Trainees

Trainees are regarded as passive receivers through out the process of training. In the university classrooms, Methodology lecturers usually stand at the front of the class and deliver lectures. They believe that trainees learn to teach if they are **told** how to write a lesson plan or **told** about teacher-student interaction etc.. As Paine describes, "... faculty read their lecture notes with marked slowness so that students could transcribe virtually the entire 'text'"(1992:190). In the school classroom, the school teachers are experts and models, and trainees prepare lessons based on the methods used by them. In other words, in the process of training, methodology lecturers and school teachers are considered superior to trainees. The relationship between them is as big jars to small jars. That is, trainees are regarded as small empty jars who know nothing about teaching. The lecturers and school teachers are regarded as big jars full of knowledge of ELT theories and experience.



Big Jars

95

Dissatisfied Trainees

With the traditional training described above, problems are unavoidable. As Yu points out "Even those who have graduated from the teachers' college still lack teaching experience"(1990:64). From an investigation undertaken among some trainees from teachers' universities (Chen ZiAn 1992), it has been found that many of them are not satisfied with the training received in the universities/colleges. Apart from the fact that the content of the course was out of date, they felt that the most difficult aspect of their teaching life was the transition of theory into practice. It took time for them to cope with the real situation. They claimed in the questionnaire that they would like the Methodology course to be up-to-date. At the moment some of them feel the course is boring and useless because of the distance between the lectures and the actual teaching.

Recent Changes

In recent years, some changes have been made to the teaching of methodology. On one hand, instead of lecturing about traditional rules and principles, the idea of communicative language teaching is gradually being introduced as part of the content. Practical teaching techniques are now also another part. Even more important is that lecturing is now not the only mode in the university classroom. Trainees are given chances to experience and practice teaching skills and techniques while they are studying the theories.

On the other hand, more emphasis is put on how to handle teaching practice. Micro-teaching has been introduced to prepare trainees for teaching in real situations (Wu 1993). Also, Tao and Gao (1992) describe how they train their trainees in the "Practice, Knowledge, again Practice and again knowledge" model. In this model, trainees are encouraged to teach creatively and chances are provided for them to reflect and to improve on their teaching. Their trainees are welcomed to schools and are highly commended for their teaching ability. Some universities have even tried to integrate TP in the department, and trainees are encouraged to use new methods (Li and Yu 1994). The reports show that after TP, trainees understand more about ELT in China. They become more aware of alternative ways of teaching and are more confident in their future teaching.

All the above changes indicate that we have improved the training course in a way. However, from these years' work, we have found that the teaching of ELT Methodology still has some unsolved problems. These problems are the barriers that affect the further development of ELT teacher training in China.

Reflecting on our Experience

There are still two big problems in the current teaching of ELT Methodology – the gap between practice and theory, and the gap between Chinese culture and Western culture.

The gap between practice and theory lies in the process of linking what has been learnt in methodology to the actual teaching in the language class. For instance, in the methodology class, trainees are introduced to communicative language teaching. They are told that it is effective and encouraged to try to use it in TP. However, our trainees are frustrated in TP, as the result of trying out the new method is not what they expect. The first problem is that they have to use very traditional textbooks, and the teacher, the school or the department will test the students on them. This makes it difficult for trainees to select from the content and try new methods. Also, they have to teach classes of 50 or more students, and they have no funds for photocopying the materials. Trainees often complain: "Why does communicative language teaching sound OK in theory, but not work in practice?".

The second gap is between Chinese culture and Western culture. Let us take the issue of teacher/student behaviour in class as an example. From our experience, we find it widely acceptable for a foreign teacher trainer in China to behave in an active, free and out-going manner. However, if Chinese trainers behave in the same way, many trainers and trainees find it unnatural, for traditionally, teachers are regarded as being superior and serious. This example does not mean that I appreciate the teachers' traditional manner. Neither does it mean that I regard modern language teaching theories as being unrealistic in China. I take it as an example only to indicate that there are gaps between cultures. We should therefore not lay all our hopes on "importing" modern and westernised methodology. We have to accept that what works in a British or an American classroom might not work in a Chinese classroom. Or, it might work in one Chinese classroom, but not in all classes. Even if we think that many methods would prove effective if teachers tried them, it takes time for people to accept and believe them simply because they are "imported". As teacher trainers, what we should do is to admit and understand the existence of the culture gaps, and try to make such gaps as narrow as possible through our own efforts in developing the course itself.

Future of the teaching of Methodology – To train ourselves First?

The trainers now involved in teaching ELT Methodology are mostly traditionally trained and have taught traditionally for years. If TP or classroom observation is to be integrated widely in the teaching of ELT Methodology, we must first understand our responsibilities. We have to change our roles. We will need not only to be instructors, but also guides, helpers, supervisors and partners as well. It is reported that action research is working well in the training process in some universities. But we, as trainers, should first understand what action research means. Only if we actually do action research before teaching it on the methodology course, can we understand the problems existing in trainees' doing action research in their own teaching. This indicates that we have to study our teaching methods and our training classes first, and to develop ourselves before we start trying to teach new things to trainees.

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Conclusion

It is unfair to expect our trainees to be perfect in their teaching after going through the current training which we know has problems. Experiences have proved that an improvement in the teaching of ELT Methodology is the key to raising the quality of language teaching. Therefore, we need to train ourselves first if we aim to improve the ELT teacher training in China. How do we carry out such trainer development in the Chinese context? We need understanding and support from all sides, especially from other trainers, no matter what nationality they might be. Responses are welcomed from abroad as well as from inside China.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Of special interest to teacher trainers are:

Teachers' lives and careers ed. S.Ball & I.Goodson (1985) Falmer Press ISBN 1 85000 029 8. A selection of papers from a conference by the same name in Oxford, 1983. Written from the viewpoint of English primary and secondary teachers in the 1980's, nevertheless containing some papers on teacher concepts, life cycles and critical incidents of interest to teachers and trainers now.

Assessing adult learners by S.Ainslie & A.Lamping (1995) CILT ISBN 1874016399. As the majority of adult education courses are now linked to some sort of accreditation, teachers have to assess their learners' progress more conciously than before. This little book offers practical suggestions on introducing assessment to learners, materials, records, marking, profiling and accreditation.

Time management for teachers by Ian Nelson (1995) Kogan Page ISBN 0 7494 17307. Starts with a test to assess how effectively we use our time at present, and to identify particular timewasters. Goes on in good-humoured vein to give some practical ideas for short and long term planning. Anyone could pick up the odd tip from this little book and it's small enough that it won't take you long to read it!

School for women by Jane Miller (1996) Virago ISBN 1853817139. Sixty percent of all teachers in Britain are women. Miller looks at the history behind this statistic and at questions such as... what is the effect on our children of being taught mainly by women? Do teachers endure condescension because the profession is predominately female? Are women teachers' minds trusted?

Doing your research project by Judith Bell (1993) Open University Press ISBN 0 335 19004 4. A guide for first time researchers in education and social sciences. Whether you are going for a masters or PhD, you will need to select a topic, identify your objectives, plan and design a methodology, devise research instruments, negotiate access to institutions, collect, analyse and present information and produce a final report. This book helps you to avoid the pitfalls and false trails in all the above in plain English.

Open file by Regina Guimaraes (1995) ISBN 85 85578 52 1. To celebrate the second anniversary of RG's business, she wrote this text on teacher self- monitoring. It is an interactive book using letters and quizzes. It's a bit like having your own personal Mum holding your hand as you try to think about your teaching. Available from the

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author at Centro de Idiomas, Rua Dr Vila Nova, 228-1, 2, e 3 andares, CEP 01222 903 Sao Paulo-SP Brazil.

ESP Ideas by Randal Holme (1996) Longman ISBN 0 582 20977 3. Latest in the Pilgrims/Longman series. The only recipe book I know on teaching academic and professional English. It will encourage a move away from dependence on texts and could prove fun to use. Major text divisions are needs analysis, genre, finding important information, instructions, calculations, visual data, defining, rational argument and meetings and seminars.

Computers and English language learning by John Higgins (1995) Intellect ISBN 1 871516 40 4. An historical collection of papers written 1966-93 on computer assisted language learning (CALL). Papers on syllabus issues and language. They do read a little like dinosaur prints now but for CALL buffs it's nice to have all the papers in one place.

Simulations by Ken Jones 3rd edition (1995) Kogan Page ISBN 07494 16661. Extensively revised version on how to choose, use, design, run and assess simulations. This edition has up-to-date examples and methodology and tries to address the criticism that some simulations are not only powerful but unethical and psychologically harmful. Pithy way to change your "teacher role" and allow experiential risks.

Assessing professional people by OSPRE by Donald Bligh (1994) Published by the police review publishing company ltd ISBN 0 903 275 02 3. The objective structured performance related examination is a method for asssessing staff(before appointment or promotion) who have to meet clients or members of the public. The book has not been written specifically for people in education so you will have to create your own mental parallels as you read about the problem of the police in Brixton.

The BEBC critical directory of ELT materials. An A4 ring binder with ten different sections. In each one e.g. Teachers' books and methodology, there is a table contrasting, say, 30 selected titles, by package components, level, topics etc. No sections on TT or periodicals. It would need to be heavily supplemented to prove more use in a staffroom than a browse along the shelves but provides a skeleton for a useful resource. Available from BEBC, who provide an excellent book ordering service, from Albion Close, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 3LL

Language skills in national curriculum development. Dunford house report 1995 available from The British Council, Medlock St, Manchester M15 4AA. A collection of over 20 papers on language in curricula from England, Wales, Australia, Cameroon, Hong Kong, Zambia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Ecuador....

More than a native speaker, an introduction for volunteers teaching abroad by Don Snow (1996) TESOL. ISBN 0 939791 64 1. Written for the thousands of volunteer English teachers going out each year from English speaking countries via organisations such as VSO and the Peace corps. Aims to provide non-technical short cuts to the craft of teaching. Works from basic survival needs (what to take, how to get through an hour's teaching) to managing a reasonably balanced course and adapting to the host culture. Realistic, down-to-earth and abstractable by any trainer working with pre-service teaachers.

Books on mentoring

Understanding mentoring: reflective strategies for school-based teacher preparation by Peter Tomlinson (1995) Open university press ISBN 0 335 19306 4. This book sees the UK move to school-based mentoring as an improvement on old college- based theory then practice arrangements for initial teacher preparation provided programmes build on recent work on professional thinking, counselling/helping strategies and beginner teachers' knowledge . Chapters on reflective coaching, interpersonal skills, coaching tactics. Direct and practically oriented but also offers reasons and rationales.

The management of mentoring, policy issues eds D. Glover & G. Mandle Kogan Page (1995) ISBN 07494 1598 3. This book presents small-scale research findings from Keele university on the background to UK government policy, the organisation of initial teacher preparation in schools, funding, ways in which staff were recruited, trained and rewarded for their new roles, effect of student teacher presence on pupils, staff and parents, experience of the student teachers themselves. All sections relate to the small scale research project.

Students as tutors and mentors ed Sinclair Goodlad (19) Kogan Page in association with British Petroleum. ISBN 0 7494 1792 7. Stimulated by a conference and backing from BP, VSO, and the university of London international mentoring and tutoring project, this book explores by case study and research report some of the settings and processes conducive to the deployment of college and university students as mentors and tutors helping pupils in local schools on a sustained and systematic basis under the supervision of teachers. Chapters on students teaching in prisons, museums, and in different countries.

Doing pragmatics by Peter Grundy (1995) Edward Arnold ISBN 0 340 58965 5. An interactive entry-level coursebook for linguistics students. Includes activities and a key and is illustrated throughout by examples of real talk. Three major headings are re-visited throughout the book. These are indexicality, relevance and intentionality. Helpful suggestions are given on different ways of using the book.

Stucturing cooperative learning (CL): lesson plans for teachers eds R & D Johnson & E Holubec (1987) Interaction book company ISBN 0 939 603 00 4. CL has been popular in the USA for many years. This compilation of lessons taught at elementary to high school level in subjects ranging from composing riddles and stringing beads to the greek philosophers and geometry, exemplifies the main principles of CL so if you read through or teach them you will pick up something of the method.

Teaching students to be peacemakers D & R Johnson (1987) Interaction books ISBN 0 939603 15 2. Teachers receive little training in how to manage conflict in the classroom constructively. If you are having problems you might like to try the practical suggestions here.

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Peace education: incorporating skills for conflict literacy into ESL learning by Anita Wenden (1994) Tele workshop TESOL. This pack of directions for facilitators plus handouts, tasks, references and cassette tape is the background for a conference on "conflict literacy". Could be adapted for use with intermediate students up or with teachers.

Are you sitting comfortably? by D.Tierney & P.Dobson (1995) CILT ISBN 1 874016 49 6. Slim, helpful 35 pages to get you started choosing, presenting, telling and following on from stories in the primary level foreign language class.

The art and science of learning languages by A Gethin & E V Gunnemark (1996) ISBN 1 871516 48 x. 344pp of which 100pp are appendices & 15 index. The authors are both multilingual. Gunnemark translates into Swedish from 45 languages. Part one is about how to learn languages. Part two, facts about languages. Part three, how to pass language exams. The authors are sceptical about the value of in- class learning as opposed to disciplined, organised self-study. ESOL professionals may thus find the book interesting since it concentrates on what language learners can do for themselves and since the suggestions and viewpoints come from a community (polyglots and translators) of which we ordinarily take little notice.

On language change by Rudi Keller (1994) Routledge ISBN 0 415 07672 2. 182pp. Historical linguistics at the highest level of generalisation. A long bout of skimming followed by study of the blurb, the intro and the conclusion left me no wiser than before I had read the title. To learn more I'd need a kilo of coffee and a free week with the curtains drawn!

Teaching-and-learning language-and-culture by M Byram et al (1994) Multilingual matters ISBN 1 85359 211 0. Written for teachers of foreign languages working within the framework of general education, this book reports on research centred on the university of Durham with connections in France, Germany and Denmark. Case studies as well as chapters on theory, methodogy, teacher education and assessment of cultural learning exemplify the view that FL learning comes not just from the acquisition of grammatical competence but also from attitude change, learning about another country and reflecting on one's own culture and identity. Recommended as one of, say, 5 or 10 books that every language teacher needs to have on their (new?) language and culture shelf.

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British Council International Seminars

(Number 9654)

Warwick seminar on literary translation 1996

8 to 14 December 1996 The University of Warwick
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The seminar will illuminate how literary translation is produced today, how translations function in their new linguistic and cultural settings, and what factors influence the decisions taken by translators and the strategies they employ.

The seminar will explore recent developments in the field of Translation Studies with special emphasis on:

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The programme will be of particular interest to practising translators, publishers interested in translation, teachers and students of literary translation.

Fee: £880 (residential)

(Number 9668)

Culture in language and the classroom: English teaching to learners from East Asia

24 March to 4 April 1997 St Andrews, Scotland
Directed by Stephen Magee

The seminar will examine and enhance effective teaching and learning by focusing on the cultural aspects of teaching and learning, not only in the procedural and formal aspects of the syllabus, but also in the content of the teaching and learning.

Main themes will include:

- consideration of cultural norms and expectations in the language itself, and how subject content is treated
- examination of the formal and procedural aspects of the syllabus
- investigation of practice in the classroom
- development of key concepts through the production of pilot methods and materials

The programme will be of particular interest to native and non-native speakers of English and professionals in the field with an interest in teaching methodology.

Fee: £1,420 (residential)

(Number 97023)

Management of Technological Innovation in ELT

6 to 12 April 1997 Brighton
Directed by Professor Brian Hill

The seminar aims to provide and demonstrate the information on the technology currently available and to allow the participants to experience this technology at first hand. Current software will also be analysed and demonstrated. The seminar will try to establish sound principles for the management of technological innovation and help participants to construct their own development plans to reflect the characteristics of their own institutions.

The main topics will include:

- an overview of educational technology and analysis of its future role in language teaching and learning
- CD-Rom technology
- Interactive multimedia
- Video, satellite and Information Technology
- Software and sampling
- How to innovate successfully

The programme will be of particular interest to senior administrators and heads of departments responsible for the introduction of technology in language teaching or learning, as well as people who run language centres.

Fee: to be announced

(Number 97045)

Training the Trainers: Course Design and Management for In-service Training in ELT

6 to 12 April 1997 Plymouth
Directed by Rod Bolitho

The seminar aims to provide participants with a grounding in INSET course design and management, and a forum to discuss design issues.

The main topics will include:

- Models of training and their relevance to INSET
- the balance between theory and practice
- training materials and methodology
- the place of language work in INSET
- procedures for feedback and evaluation

The programme will be of particular interest to those concerned with the design and delivery of INSET, including trainers, lecturers, inspectors, resource centre personnel and ministry officials.

Fee: £990 (residential)

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